

SAN JOSE HISTORICAL MUSEUM
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

AUDIO CASSETTE: #108A/B (Tapes 1 & 2)

VIDEO CASSETTE:

INTERVIEW DATE: January 6 & 9, 1992

INTERVIEWEE: Mildred S. Noble

SUBJECT: Family History/Girl Scouts, Salvation Army

INTERVIEWER: Ruth R. Noseworthy, SJHM Volunteer

TRANSCRIBER: Evelyn K. Cannon, SJHM Volunteer

For the Oral History Program at the San Jose Historical Museum this is January 6, 1992 and I am the Interviewer. The Narrator is Mildred S. Noble at 424 Third Street, San Jose, California and the setting is her beautiful Victorian home in the living room and this home was built in 1888 and has been kept in wonderful condition. And it's a rainy day, it's a lovely day to be doing this.

MN = Mildred Noble

RN = Ruth Noseworthy

Tape 1, Side 1

RN (Tape begins in mid-sentence) facts with where you were born and grew up.

MN Oh yes. I came into this world unannounced weighing in at 2 1/2 pounds. I was a surprise to the family and when my grandfather went to visit my mother, which he did every day, he ran all the way home to tell the family, "Guess what Daisy has up there." And so with the love and care of my extended family I survived. My first bassinet was a little shoe box and they tell me that they

put cotton batting in there and just oil on me -- I did not have a bath for quite a few days -- and then I graduated to a little grape basket. And one cousin said, "You know, your great grandmother used to carry you around in her bosom to keep you warm."

RN Oh (laughter)..

Now which grandfather was it?

MN This was my grandfather Thorne, T-h-o-r-n-e.

RN Was that your mother's....

MN My mother's father. My parents came to New England in 1636; I mean my ancestors came in 1636, when Massachusetts was Massachusetts Bay Colony.

RN Was that on your father's side?

MN This is all on my grandmother's and great grandmother's side.

RN Maternal?

MN Yes.

RN Your mother's?

MN Let's see. Oh yes, I was put behind the back of the stove to keep me warm, and evidently I survived because not too many premature babies did, and I had a great deal of love and care at that time. And I remember they watched my health for quite a while.

RN Were you a first child?

MN No, my sister had been born nine months earlier. And so we have a standing joke right now, for three months we're the same age. So that I had one sister. My mother was a young mother. My mother, I think, was the first single parent; they divorced, which was unheard of in the Episcopal Church in those days. So we went to live with my grandparents in this home that was built in 1845; no running water -- there was a pump -- no electricity and no bathroom. But it was a small farm and we lived there until we were about 12 years old and my mother built a home right next to it. I think probably we had a very wonderful life. My mother was taken ill when we were 11 years old, she had tuberculosis and was in the hospital and then she died when I was 16. So my grandparents and great grandparents had a great deal to do with our upbringing and probably my grandfather was the greatest

influence on my life.

RN And was that grandfather Thorne?

MN Grandfather Thorne, yes, he was the greatest influence, the father image in my life. I've written a thing about that, about him, because he was sort of a Jack-of-all-trades. You would say he was self-employed. He was the Town Constable for 55 years, he had a laundry room -- you must remember this was a small town outside of Boston.

RN And the name of it?

MN Millis, M-i-l-l-i-s, Massachusetts. And he had a laundry room where he went around to the different Jewish hotels -- there was a Jewish section of our town -- and he would take the laundry over to the next town. He also, because there were a great many Catholics, had a fish business.

RN What was the next town's name? Do you remember?

MN That was in Natick, N-a-t-i-c-k, Massachusetts. And then on Sunday we all went down and took the papers up off the train at 5 o'clock in the morning and we went to the drugstore and helped to fold them. You see, we had an opportunity of working with my grandfather by being on --

well he had a horse and buggy first, and on his trucks we'd go around and we would help him and we learned to make change that way and we earned a little bit of money. And then he was interested in everything that we did. He had us join the 4H Club, the Girl Scouts, everything that was available he saw to it that we went. We didn't have any chance to get out of line. You know, when you live in a small town you don't get out of line because everybody knows what everybody else is doing.

RN About how many people were in....?

MN Well, there were around 1500.

RN And that's in Millis?

MN In Millis.

RN What year was this about?

MN Well, it was oh in the 1920s, this part of it. I was born in 1911. A small town is different, everybody goes to everything. And he used to be the policeman at the movie house and he was the policeman at the dances; everybody went and there was a big stag line and you never lacked for people to dance with because my sister

and I used to teach the boys how to dance. And then after my mother died -- she had foresight enough that she had insurance -- and we were able to go to college. This was during the Depression and so both my sister and I had money left for us to go to college and I went to Framingham State Teachers College, which majored to teach Home Economics.

RN Well what did your grandfather do?

MN That was his business.

RN His business was to collect?

MN Well, his business was the laundryman, paperman, the fish man, the Town Constable, the dogcatcher; he was a Jack-of-all-trades.

RN Oh, I see, I see now.

MN And he loved to garden and we had a huge garden. And then he used to take produce and things into Boston and he would bring back delivery things, like a delivery truck.

RN Isn't that interesting. Well, then your grandmother

really took care of....

MN My great grandmother.

RN Your great grandmother!

MN My great grandmother brought us up.

RN Great grandmother Thorne?

MN No, Daniels. That was my grandfather's mother-in-law.
There was a scandal in the family.

RN In the McDaniels?

MN This was my mother's grandmother.

RN Your mother's grandmother. McDaniels.

MN Daniels, D-a-n-i-e-l-s.

RN Oh, just Daniels, D-a-n-i-e-l-s.

MN See, they were the ones that were the very early settlers
that came over on the Assurance, not on the Mayflower but
on the Assurance, from Plymouth.

RN And how would you spell the Assurance?

MN A-s-s-u-r-a-n-c-e.

RN Oh, just like it sounds. A ship.

MN A ship, Assurance.

RN When was this?

MN That was in about 1636.

RN My goodness. So this was the Daniels name.

MN The Daniels family and they were millers. You see, we had a lot of millponds there and they were millers.

RN Millponds in Millis? That sounds.... (laughter)

MN They were millers for seven generations, you know, grinding of the grain and everything. So that there was quite a history through the Daniels family. And then a lady that the Daniels married -- my great grandfather -- they were from the Richardson family which has a great deal of history. One of the doctors was doctor to George Washington so there's quite a history there.

RN So interwoven.

MN Oh yes. So that got me as far as college. And I was always interested in camping, that had been one of my long suits. We had one of the first Girl Scout Troops in the United States. Probably the second person that had a great deal of influence on my life was the lady who established this Girl Scout Troop, a Flora B. Mundy, M-u-n-d-y, and she was a wealthy woman and very good friend of Juliet Gordon Lowe and trained to establish the scout organization in our town.

RN Oh excuse me. Juliet Gordon Lowe?

MN Was the founder of Girl Scouting. And so everybody in town joined the Girl Scouts and in the summertime this Mrs. Mundy had a camp up in New Hampshire and so we got to go there. The first year my sister went and then the second year I went. That was up in Gilmingtton, New Hampshire. And I think that had a great deal of influence on my life, following the Girl Scout standards and being in the camping field and later on camping became one of my avocations. So I went there every summer. I went there as a patrol leader, training course, and then this lady got me my first position as a Junior Counselor in Waltham, Massachusetts.

RN How do you pronounce Waltham?

MN Waltham W-a-l-t-h-a-m, Waltham. And then also she made a recommendation for my first job as a Counselor in New York so she had a great deal of influence. And she had a beautiful farm and she built a great big cabin so all the girls could go up there and camp overnight. So that's another lady that really had.

RN About how old were you at that time?

MN Oh, I was a teenager.

RN The '30s, '20s, still the '20s?

MN The '20s. In the '30s I went to college. The other person that was a great influence was my girlfriend's mother, a lovely lady, a well-to-do lady, and I was sort of a companion for her daughter. Everywhere she went she always took me and I learned all the niceties of life and all the social graces, etc. So those three people I think....

RN What was her name?

MN Her name was Mrs. Chushman C-h-u-s-h-m-a-n.

RN And your girlfriend's name?

MN Lorraine. They always wanted somebody to go with their daughter and I was in (chuckle).

RN Well, to get back -- because I think it's so interesting being raised by your great grandmother and your grandfather and this was around 19....

MN This was in the '20s.

RN In the '20s. What was the typical day when you went to school when you were going to grammar school?

MN Oh, we'd get up in the morning -- my grandfather would get up at 5:00 in the morning and start the old wooden coal stove, put so much kerosene in it the lids all jumped right up off of the stove (laughter). And when we went down it was cold upstairs; we took a bucket of water upstairs and we bathed upstairs with a little kerosene stove. And then we would go down and my grandfather would have breakfast, hot cereal and fried potatoes and meat and everything. He said, "You girls cannot go off to school without your stomachs with something warm in them. So then we....

RN Those were really substantial meals for breakfast....

MN Oh yes.

RN Compared to today.

MN Yes. Well living on a farm you eat a little heavier.
Then we would walk almost a mile to school.

RN What kind of clothes did you wear?

MN Oh, we had the plain little cotton. When my mother was
alive, she made all our clothes. We had beautiful little
cotton dresses, my sister one color and I the other
color.

RN In the winter time how far did you have to walk?

MN Oh, about a mile. We just missed the part where the
sleigh would pick you up or the bus would pick you up.
And we came home for lunch; we had our dinner at noon and
then we walked back in the afternoon.

RN And what would dinner be like?

MN It would be a regular farm dinner.

RN You had more meat and potatoes? (laughter)

MN Meat and potatoe and all the different vegetables and puddings. My great grandmother was a wonderful cook, always pies, cakes and so forth, so that we really had everything nourishing that we needed.

RN Did you have animals, like cows, on your farm?

MN Pigs they would have once in a while.

RN And pigs, uh huh. And where did you get your fresh milk?

MN It was delivered.

RN It was delivered even then. And how was it delivered?
In a large can?

MN Well it came in a milk bottle and when it was frozen it rose right up out of the milk bottle. So that that was delivered. Another interesting thing was that in this small town they didn't have any big grocery stores like they do, you know, Safeway; but the delivery man came in the morning, he took your order, he called it in to the store and in the afternoon he delivered it. Every day that would take place.

RN Was there an extra charge?

MN No no. Of course then later on they brought in more grocery stores, but at this time there was just that one grocery store. The town had a post office and a drugstore and the one grocery store. The town was a place of employment because they had a big shoe factory there, they had a Clicquot Club Ginger Ale.

RN What was the name of the ginger ale?

MN Clicquot C-l-i-c-q-u-o-t. And they also had a big papermill there so people came from out of town to work. The shoes that they made were for all the army and the navy and the police type of shoe.

RN That's good employment.

MN Yeah, it was a good employment place. The activities that we had -- oh you'd go ice skating, that was a big thing down on the pond, and parents always warning whether you're going to drown. And they usually had dances on Friday night and the grange was very active. They didn't have any dances during Lent, there were so many Catholics.

RN Well as a younger girl, the two of you must have been like twins. What did you do for recreation? Do you remember?

MN Well, we did a great deal of sewing.

RN You did a lot of sewing.

MN We did a lot of sewing. We played basketball and we ice skated, we skied, we snow shoed and we sledged, a great many activities around lakes because we had many lakes. We'd go to a lake and go canoeing.

RN Oh, how wonderful.

MN Yes, so that there was all kinds of activities. And somebody would have a car and a little bit of money for gasoline and we'd take off for a movie.

RN And where was the movie, in Boston?

MN Well, we'd have to go to another town. Through our English classes we went to all different Shakespeare plays and so forth in Boston. That was just a short, what was it, 20 miles from Boston.

RN Like say, when you were 10 years old, did you have any special games that you played like cards of some kind. Was there anything popular in those days?

MN I think Whist was very popular but I didn't play Whist, but we played Rummy and we played....

RN Casino?

MN Oh you know, marble games and checkers.

RN Okay. That's what I wondered if they played in those days.

MN Oh yes, all those different things. The one thing I remember about my great grandmother in the winter, you know in the snow, we'd play fox and geese.

RN You know I never have lived in the snow so....

MN Well, you make a great big circle and then you make it like a pie and you try to chase the person that you catch them -- they're the goose -- they have to go in the center. (Laughter) So I remember her going out in the snow and showing us how to play.

RN Oh, how delightful.

MN She was hard of hearing, my great grandmother, which was a blessing because....

RN Do you have any idea what her age was then because....

MN Well, she must have been like in her sixties. She was a young great grandmother.

RN Healthy it sounds.

MN Oh yes, a little tiny lady. And we'd go to the movies and we'd always walk under her arms when we'd walk home from the movies. You see, she was a little taller than us until we got too big for it. But she was a real wonderful little soul.

RN Now this was your great grandmother?

MN Great grandmother, um hmm.

RN Isn't that marvelous. Well whatever happened to your grandmother?

MN Well, that was sort of a disgrace. She ran off with a

married man (laughter).

RN Oh, that's what happened, even back then (laughter).

MN So there was a little bit of friction in the family. We used to visit with her but it left quite a rift in the family which was rather too bad because my grandfather wouldn't divorce her and she....

RN Oh my. Do you mind explaining that a little further? This is something if you didn't want known we could cut out. But I think today's world makes it even more interesting.

MN She would not divorce him but after they would have been married 15....

RN Now this is Grandfather Thorne's....

MN Yes.

RN First wife?

MN Yes and he wouldn't give her a divorce. But anyway 15 years later she sued him for a divorce but he got it.

RN But he got the divorce.

MN He got it and she was asked to leave town.

RN Oh, isn't that interesting. But she lived there with the fellow she ran off with?

MN No, she went to a different town.

RN She went to a different town?

MN Oh yes, she had stores. She was a milliner by trade. She really should have been born in this generation because she was an up-and-coming villain in those days. And so she had a millinery business, you know hat making, and then she had many little shops and stores and she used to cook for -- truck drivers would stop by and she'd cook.

RN And this was after she had left, long afterwards.

MN In those days people did not discuss what happened. We didn't know why our folks got a divorce, we didn't know why. We heard this rumour and they did not discuss with children any of their personal affairs. It made quite an interesting life (laughter).

RN So what was your grandmother's name?

MN Her name was Ama Daniel. No, my grandmother? Hers was
Eva Thorne.

RN Your mother's name was?

MN Daisy.

RN Daisy.

MN Or Marguerite.

RN And from Marguerite?

MN Yes, Marguerite, and her mother was Eva Alberta.

RN So that was your grandmother?

MN Yes.

RN So it was Eva Alberta that ran away -- Thorne. And then
it was your great grandmother that took care of you and
her name was?

MN Ama, A-m-a, Frances Richardson Daniels. But anyway, it's

kind of an interesting history (laughter).

RN It is, it is indeed.

MN Scandal for a small town (laughter).

RN Well we had them in our family, too (laughter). So we were talking about when you were a little child and you have so much to share that I don't want to miss anything. And I'm trying to think of perhaps at that particular time were you exposed to any church activities?

MN Oh yes, I think maybe that was one reason there was a divorce. My father objected to my mother being in church; she was a church organist for the Episcopal Church and my great grandmother was a charter member of the Church of England and so when we were little my mother would take us and put us on the pew and she'd play the organ -- it was the old pump organ -- and so she was very very active in the Episcopal Church. But her father's family were Congregationals so all the young people went there so when my sister and I would finish with our church we'd go over to the Congregational Church because there was so many young people there. I don't know whether you ever do it, you kind of visualize how far back you can remember?

RN Oh yes.

MN I can remember living in that first home where we lived and on one instance....

RN That's with your mother?

MN Yes, my mother and father. They caught pheasants and my father was evidently cleaning it and so I stood up and I said, "Well, what you doing?" And he said, "Oh, I'm dressing the pheasant." Well I said, "No you're not, you're taking off all his feathers." (Laughter) So I can remember every home I ever lived in, visualize that. You see, I was going and planned to write up a lot of these things to have on hand. In fact, I have one here written that was put into the Salvation Army Paper. I led a nice country life.

RN Nice background.

MN It was nice background but I did not want to live there after I -- well, I actually was not a part of the town after I went to college because I stayed in the dormitories and then I was away all summer so for four years, five years....

RN Well, we outgrow.

MN Yeah, outgrow it. But I did not want to live that close to a town. Well, the opportunities weren't there, it was during the Depression, and so there were no jobs available for teachers. In my junior year I met my husband; he was a friend of my sister's, he was in the Marine Corps. And Dick said, "Oh, come on home this weekend, I have somebody to introduce you to." And I said, "Oh, I'll go take a look at him." (Chuckle)

RN Well, I want to hear all about that but I don't want to leave that background. I think this is so interesting, to me. I don't know if it's going to be interesting or not to the Museum (laughter). I think it's wonderful. And I wondered, you know, what kind of chores you had when you were....

MN Oh, we cleaned house. My mother was Mrs. Clean (laughter) and we all had our duties.

RN Now when did you say your mother left?

MN When I was about 11.

RN Eleven so you still have good memories then of your

mother.

MN Oh yeah. She was so clean that we weren't allowed to go in the house when we came home from school (chuckle). We'd have to wait until she came if she wasn't there. I remember in this older home the carpets were all mats because they thought that was healthier than rugs and so you cleaned the mats with a whisk broom. You got on your hands and knees and you whisked under the beds and everything. And also we had chamber pots which that was one of our duties to take care of those each day and also the lamps that had to be cleaned.

RN The chimneys, the glass.

MN The glass chimneys on the lamps had to be washed.

RN And that was kerosene?

MN Uh huh.

RN That kept you busy didn't it.

MN Yeah there were plenty of household duties and we each had our own -- I mean we kept our own rooms clean and we helped with the....

RN Did you share a room, you and your sister?

MN No, we had separate rooms.

RN Well how nice.

MN Well my mother right after the divorce went to business college so she worked until we were about 11 and she took a nine months course and got it done in six months.

RN I see where you get your intelligence. (Laughter)

MN Well anyway, she was a go-getter too and she loved to sing and dance and she was in all the musicals and everything.

RN The musicals that were....

MN When they put on minstrel shows in the town.

RN What organization would?

MN Oh it would be through the grange.

RN Through the grange, I see.

MN Yeah, they put on. She was very active in the grange. So that there wasn't, other than the school activities which, you know, there were plays every year or the basketball and the different events, football.

RN So I'm a little confused. When your mother left you were about 11?

MN Yes.

RN Then you went and lived with your grandfather?

MN No, we were there already.

RN You were there already. I see.

MN And my mother had built a home so we had a home next door. We eventually moved into this home but we still ate with my grandparents.

RN I see, uh huh.

MN That's quite a (chuckle) history.

RN Yes indeed. So your grandparents were always there.

MN Uh huh. You know, we never went home to an empty house like the children do nowadays. There was always somebody there.

RN Yes, that means a lot. So what about when you were ill, you know, when you were very young and ill?

MN Well, I survived the influenza of 1918. Everybody got it, people were dying right and left. And my sister got it and I thought, "Oh, I'm not gonna get it." But I slept for 72 hours and when I woke up my grandfather wanted to know what I wanted. I said, "Shredded wheat and cold milk." (Laughter) And he got up in the middle of the night and went and got it for me.

RN What was the medical practice at that time?

MN Well the doctors used to come to the house with a little black bag and with all the little medicines and usually they would say, "Give her a teaspoon of sugar with a little bit of whiskey for her throat." But the doctors came to your home in a horse and buggy.

RN Did your grandmother, or great grandmother I should say, have any particular thing that she did if you had a cold?

MN Oh, my grandfather had what they called "antifagestine", it was like a mudpack; they put a mudpack on your chest. And when she got older she often would come down with, you know, a chest problem. Well he'd get that and he'd heat it on the stove and he'd put it on her chest.

RN Mud?

MN Well it was called "antifagestine", it's like a mudpack.

RN It wasn't mud though was it?

MN No no, but it was....

RN Mustard?

MN Well it was some kind of a pack called "antifagestine" or "antifalogastine" but he called it "antifagestine." (Laughter) So that and the doctor would come and say, "Well, I don't know." But next morning she'd be up. I don't ever recall being ill too often.

RN Wonderful wonderful.

MN If I were it was because I overate (laughter) -- cucumbers or something like that.

RN I see where you have already mentioned where your values and attitudes came from, you know, your grandfather.

MN Those standards were very high in those days and of course the standards of the Girl Scout organization. Try and live up to their laws and promise.

RN It doesn't sound like your grandfather was really strict with you. Was it necessary?

MN We had a few lickings (laughter). He had a razor strap and I had decided I had just about enough of that on my legs so I said to my sister, "Let's go get some bread and peanut butter." And we went out in the buggies and we cut that razor strap up and buried it (laughter). I had had it. And when I was about 15, I wondered when are they ever gonna stop licking us when I knew that sometimes I was not wrong. You know, in this day and age they wouldn't get by with what they did in those days. And my grandmother used to use a little buggy whip which had a little snap on the end of it, but she never beat us or anything. We never were beaten, we were just zapped.

RN Strapped on the legs, well that hurts.

MN Well surely and I think to this day that some of the

problem I have with my legs are from them using that on it.

RN I'm sure that could be true. (Laughter)

But we went through that so quickly. You were so wonderful, goodness. Okay, we were talking about....

MN Discipline.

RN Discipline, yes indeed. So who was....

MN Well, my grandfather was....

RN He was more the disciplinarian.

MN Yeah, well he being the truant officer, rather than sending the children to school, he would put them on the wagon and train them to help him. You see, he was not the every day disciplinarian but around the house there was a big bush, a forsythia bush, and often....

RN Forsythia?

MN Yeah, it's a big....

RN Sounds like a lilac. What kind of plant?

MN Well it's a great big bush. Well, he used to take the switches off of that and sometimes he would chase my sister. She used to get into a lot of trouble. I didn't seem to need the discipline that my sister did. I probably profited by hers. But she had a nervous condition, what they called "St. Vitus Dance", and we often say that some of her discipline problem was because she couldn't help it. They didn't have medicine to control, I think it was palsy of course, so that often he'd chase her around the house but he never caught her (laughter). But no, he was a very kindly person and he used to enter into many of the -- oh we played hide and go seek at home and he'd enter in, he'd tell us where to hide and help us make popcorn and candy and things like that. It really was a very, as I look back, a very loving atmosphere that we were brought up in.

RN Yes I should say. It certainly sounds that way to me. And then you went to college and what was the name of that?

MN That was Framingham Teachers College.

RN Would you spell that.

MN F-r-a-m-i-n-g-h-a-m.

RN And was it in....

MN It was in Framingham, Massachusetts.

RN And that was how far from Boston?

MN Well it was about, oh, 15 miles.

RN Oh, that wasn't far. About how many people?

MN Well we had 400 when we were there. And then you have about 10,000 go there now.

RN 400 in the college. And the college is still there?

MN Yes, it was a girls college at that time.

RN Like the normal teaching school?

MN Yeah uh huh, and it was only for teachers and dietitians. You see, so many of my classmates became dietitians, you know in foods, but I majored in home economics, clothing and foods. But the sad part was that when we went we agreed that we would teach so many years to pay back the

state; well it was right during the Depression and there were no jobs available. I think there was only one person in my class that got a job that year.

RN And you lived in the dormitories.

MN Yes and that was the most wonderful life, just loved it.

RN Learning about other people and how they were raised.

MN Oh yes. I was going to go to the college because my girlfriend was going but she didn't go, but my nextdoor neighbor went to this college and she took me over there for a weekend. They had a big celebration at the college and games and so forth and I fell in love with the dormitories so I made up my mind to go there. And it was truly a wonderful, a wonderful life because you met so many people and you either roomed with somebody or you had a single room and it was a four-year college. Oh, I always managed to get....

RN Now how old were you when you started there?

MN Oh I was 18, 18 right out of high school. But I was active in those activities, officers in the different clubs and so forth.

RN And this was still in the '20s?

MN No '30, 1930. I was graduated from high school in 1929.
And many of the girls would come home with me on the
weekend. I figured they might have been astounded not
having all the facilities but they didn't seem to mind.
You see, in our third year we'd go out and do practice
teaching and so they would come and then they would leave
from my house and go to some small town.

RN You lived in a dormitory. How many girls in one room at
that time?

MN Oh usually one. There were some rooms where there would
be two.

RN Oh, when you say dormitory I thought there'd be maybe 12
beds in one.

MN No they were all single rooms. You had a bed and a chair
and a desk and a closet.

RN And how about dining?

MN They had a main dining room and they did your laundry
because you see we wore the white uniforms and they did

the laundry, that came under that. All the food was paid for.

RN Oh, white uniforms. I didn't know that.

MN Oh yeah, when we did the cooking classes. And they had dances and so forth and of course everybody sewed so we always swapped dresses enough for the formal dances.

RN Oh, it sounds really fun and frivolous. (Laughter)

MN Well, I kind of wished it was a co-educational school but it wasn't.

RN Well now how much did that cost per year?

MN Well I had \$1600 for four years and I worked in the summer at a hundred dollars. I also sewed for other people, I did their hair to earn money that way. But no extra money; if I wanted to go down to the main big town I used to walk the 2 1/2 miles because I didn't have a nickle.

RN Now how would you pay for your meals? Was that....

MN It was all inclusive.

RN All inclusive.

MN And I forgot what it was quarterly, something like \$25 or something or something like that.

RN Twenty-five dollars, this was your laundry (laughter)....

MN Yeah, lodging.

RN Your lodging, food....

MN We bought our books.

RN And the books were extra? (Laughter) \$25!

MN Well it was fortunate in that, because I majored in clothing, that I made all my own clothes.

RN How wonderful.

MN And that was a big help. And I was good at it. And I took on children's clothing. I was excellent in sewing.

RN Well that's wonderful.

MN And sewed until I was 60 and then I quit. (Laughter)

RN Well how many years now was that?

MN Four years.

RN Four years. Well, a wonderful experience.

MN I was one of the lucky ones that I got a job in the summer at a hundred dollars. I used to get my way paid to New York and back.

RN And what did you do?

MN I was a counselor, Dietitian.

RN Where?

MN One was in the Catskill Mountains, Middletown Girl Scout Camp.

RN Oh I see.

MN And YWCA Camp.

RN For these people who vacationed in the summertime.

MN No, it was Girl Scout Camps.

RN Girl Scout Camps.

MN Uh huh and YW Camps. And you'd be a unit leader, but usually I was in charge of all the crafts. The cooks wouldn't let me in the kitchen so I didn't do very much in dietetics.

RN (Laughter) Well, I think you probably enjoyed the other more.

MN Oh yeah. And they usually were on a big lake and very nice.

RN I'm having so much fun here (laughter). I hate to leave this part of your background and if anything comes up that you think might be interesting just, you know, break in and talk about it. But you started to talk about when you got your husband.

MN He was in the Marine Corps. He wasn't to get out until 1934, but he got out then we got married and came to California.

RN And you did say you were introduced to him?

MN My friend introduced him. He was stationed in

Philadelphia and then he transferred to the Chelsea Naval Yard in Massachusetts right outside of Boston so I got to see him more often. That was my junior year that I met him. And he was very anxious to come home because he hadn't been here and I didn't know anything about his family, didn't know anything. I could have gotten into some kind of a, you know, odd family. His mother would write to me and she was a Christian Science practitioner at that time and was always sending me books and, you know, I wasn't interested in Christian Science (laughter) at that time. But anyway, we took off for California in a Model A Ford.

RN Well, would you like to tell me a little bit about your wedding?

MN Well, it was very simple. We were married in the rectory of the minister who had baptized my mother, my sister and I and confirmed us.

RN And his name, do you remember?

MN Noble. Oh, Reverend Miner.

RN M-i-n...

MN e-r. And he had a home in Franklin, Massachusetts. So we had a very simple wedding, my girlfriend, my grandparents and my sister and I. And my sister often says, "You didn't stay long enough for us to give you a decent wedding." (Laughter) But my husband was so anxious to come back to California and to go in Yellowstone.

RN Well now, what year was that?

MN That was 1934.

RN And the date of your marriage?

MN In September 11th. And three weeks later I took off and I was so tired after working all summer in the camp.

RN And you did graduate?

MN Oh yeah, oh yeah. Graduation was in 1933 but I worked another year and lived in New York for a short time, in Newberg, New York.

RN That must have been grand, when I think of the old movies at that time. That was the time to be in New York.

MN Oh yeah. When the Counselors wanted to go anywhere, they'd take off and go down to New York City. One of the ladies, her father was interested in horse racing and so we used to go to the horse races.

RN Oh, what was the name of wherever they had the horse races. Do you remember?

MN Goshen.

RN Goshen?

MN Goshen, New York. They've since moved out from there. But we'd visit around at different homes of different counselors. So it was kind of an interesting life this town, here, around camping, the whole thing. You know, later on it became my avocation, was camping.

RN Well, how did you travel from Massachusetts to California?

MN Oh, we bought a Model A Ford.

RN What year was that?

MN That was a 1929 Ford, but it was 1934. And so we took

off.

RN Did it have a rumble seat? (Laughter)

MN It didn't have any trunk. Everything was packed in the back seat.

RN Was it four doors or two doors?

MN Yeah, four doors. And so we took off and we visited different people in Philadelphia and in New York, you know, friends that we had. My husband was very lucky that he had come in contact with some very well-to-do people in Philadelphia and they always had him out every Sunday and they went to church four times. And he would invite me down and I would stay with some of those people. But he always managed to be the Captain's Orderly or the Admiral's Orderly and met these very nice people that were kind to him. And so we stopped by to see them and we kept in contact with those people for a good many years, but since then many of those people have passed away. But that was kind of interesting to take a trip. I felt real guilty going out of town.

RN Well, you know, I'm very ignorant about those times, really the early '30s. It was still quite modern, I

suppose, but I'm trying to think of gas stations, you know, rest stops for traveling. What were they like?

MN They didn't have motels. If they did, they were very poor. We stopped in guest houses. You'd ride around a town until it would say "50 cents" or "25 cents a night." And you'd go knock on the door and they would show us a bedroom and sometimes they'd have fruit on the table. You'd get up in the morning and then you'd leave. But it was a marvelous time to travel and we only spent less than a hundred dollars for two weeks on the road. But the restaurants served wonderful food; you'd get a steak that would just lap right over the plate. (Laughter) Let's see, we visited in New York and then Philadelphia and then we stopped off at the World's Fair in Chicago, which was really interesting, and I thought, "Oh, my goodness, we must be almost all the way to California", when I found out it was only a third of the way. You know, I had never been that far away from Massachusetts. In fact, my sister and I were the first people to leave this small town to live some place else.

RN From your family.

MN From the family. So then we stopped off at Niagra Falls. We just did all....

RN That's so ideal.

MN All the different things. Well, my husband had friends that lived close by there. And then we stopped off in Landa, Wyoming, which the Noble family came from, and we rode the range in the Model A Ford rounding up cattle.

RN Oh how interesting.

MN So that we really had a real nice trip.

RN Now I understand that the Noble family had quite a history also.

MN Oh yes, they do, yes. Lander, Wyoming is where....

RN How do you spell that?

MN L-a-n-d-e-r Lander, Wyoming.

Tape 1, Side 2.

MN Anyway, we came to California and stopped off at Lake Tahoe and we didn't go into Reno because I thought we had to pay to go in to gamble (laughter). So we visited in Sacramento; my husband's mother lived there. It was so

hot that I vowed then I would never live in Sacramento. It was boiling hot in October. You know how hot, it got over a hundred degrees.

RN Excuse me. I understand your husband's mother lived in Sacramento but I thought they lived right here in this house in San Jose.

MN Well they did at one time. I'll give you the history of that at one time.

RN Okay, oh sure.

MN His mother and father were divorced too so that we've got lots of divorces in the family (chuckle). The Noble family came from upper New York in Watertown, New York, which is right close to Canada, and they had been in the brewery business and the father passed away when he was quite young and the mother raised the six children. There were six children in the Noble family, three girls and...

RN Now what year was this about?

MN Oh, this was in about 1850. There were six children and the picture I have in the hall is the mother who raised

these children and they were all very well educated, and as young men they became interested in coming West and they worked in mercantile business just outside of Lander. And then they got the contract with the government to bring in the meat and the produce for the soldiers that were at Wind River Reservation. So then gradually each brother came out and each sister came out with their husbands and they had great interests in cattle farming and there's a Noble Bank and a Noble Hotel, and so that they acquired quite a bit of money at that time, this group I would call a combine of families. Then gradually this one branch of the Noble family which was William Nathaniel who built this home -- his daughter is Jeanette -- his daughter had trouble with her throat so they thought they would come to California where it wasn't such a high altitude as in Lander, Wyoming. But that whole history in Lander, Wyoming is quite a history too. They had big interests in Nevada, they had a big sheep ranch and I think they made a lot of their money selling wool during the war, first World War. So they came to California and had planned to live in Palo Alto but the grandmother got interested in the Methodist Church so they stayed here and they lived at what was the San Jose Hotel over on First Street where the Post Office now is located. There was a hotel in there.

RN What Post Office is located....

MN The downtown Post Office. That was a big hotel when the Noble family came here.

RN Oh, is that Post Office still there across the street from St. James Park?

MN Yes uh huh. That was the St. James Hotel. And so the children got so obstreperous that they decided they were going to build a home here so Mr. Noble, this was the Hensley Tract, and he was helped to bring that into being; you know, there was a lot of legal work in bringing this whole block of property. And he chose this piece of property because it was the highest. You see the water used to come down as far as Empire Street and there was a lake across the street and there was an artesian well under the house here. So they decided to build this home. The grandmother designed it; you know, you could send for what they call "patterns" for these Queen Anne homes so she designed this one. And then another family in the Noble family had one in Milwaukee just like it. And they took a trip around the United States while they were building this home, and then when they came back the people next door tore down their house. Those people came over here to live while they

were putting up a new house over there right next door from there. So the grandfather decided he was going to have five bedrooms; he was tired of giving up his bed all those years because they had a lot of their wealthy friends that would come out and stay all summer. So that's why this was a five-bedroom Queen Anne home. And he was....

RN Well what year was this house built?

MN Well it was about 1888.

RN That this house was built.

MN Uh huh. According to that biography there, it said he first came here in 1888; however, they kept up their interests and went back and rounded up the cattle every year, and this son who was my father-in-law would go back and help 'em; up until about 1920 they rounded up their cattle. Anyway, he was instrumental in helping to build the Elks Club here and also he set young men up in business -- Jay McCabe's Hat Shop; he would loan money to the different people that wanted to establish business.

RN Jay McCabe's Hat Shop. Well isn't that interesting.

MN Do you remember Jay McCabe? He was very active here.

RN I should say!

MN Well he was _____ my father-in-law, he lived just down the street so that they were good friends for years. So that they had many social activities here; the grandmother was quite social. The aunt, who was Aunt Jane....

RN You know, I should be asking you the names of these people as you talk about them, you know, and I'm not doing it. I'm so -- I'm almost hypnotized by your story (laughter) and so will you....

MN Well, Jeanette was....

(PAUSE)

RN And we can start perhaps with who established this family here. You know, you said that the house was built in 1888.

MN 1888.

RN And he helped establish the Elks Club. Now who is he?

MN Oh, William Nathaniel Noble, the grandfather.

RN Okay and then your husband's father's name was?

MN Was William Worden.

RN How do you spell the middle name?

MN W-o-r-d-e-n and my husband was William Roberts IV
(laughter). Anyway, William Nathaniel was the
grandfather.

RN Uh huh. He established the house.

MN Yes, and his wife was Jennie Sheppard Noble and she was
the one who designed the house.

RN I see.

MN And she's the one who was the social person, well they
both were _____. Now their daughter Jeanette
J-e-a-n-e-t-t-e was a wonderful concert pianist and she
started taking music lessons over here where the Germania
Hall is. She went there every day and took piano
lessons.

RN Do you know what it was called before it was Germania?

MN No, I've been trying to remember the name of some professor that -- I should because I was a docent there.

RN When? Isn't that interesting.

MN When they had open house. Well anyway, she played for all the school plays, and downstairs you'll see a picture of a little girl at a piano -- it's not her; but when she graduated from high school they gave her that picture because she had played. Now she played for all the concerts, the light opera series and she...

RN Now where would this be?

MN Well, they had a theater over on North First Street, an opera house.

RN Was that the old Victory Theater, as I remember?

MN The old Victory Theater, yes. And so she played for all those. See, she belonged to a society that was interested in children and so they were always raising funds. I think it's that home that was down there on Alma and First.

RN Benevolent Society, something....

MN Yeah, Home of Benevolence, like that.

RN Something like that.

MN And so she always played and until the union required that she belong to the union. Well, she was quite the society lady and she wasn't about to become part of a union. So this one play they wouldn't let her play; the lady who had the lead wouldn't sing unless Aunt Jane played so finally they bought a ticket for her to join the union. The man sat on the chair beside her while she played and....

RN The union man?

MN The union man so she decided. She says, "I just did this for charity and I'm not gonna play any more," and she quit.

RN My my! That's a shame.

MN Well anyway, they wanted her to be in a parade and she wouldn't. Well anyway, she was going to be accompanist for Madame Shumanheink. I don't know whether you remember the wonderful German singer?

RN Madame Shumanheink. Have you any idea how that's spelled? (laughter)

MN S-h-u-m-a-n-h-e-i-n-k and her cousin was over in Europe during the war and he was a friend of Madame Shumanheink's son; they both went to military school.

RN Do you know his name? The cousin's name?

MN He was a Noble.

RN A Noble.

MN Yeah, a Noble. Let's see which Noble was that. Oh, I can't remember what the Noble was. Well anyway, he had died over there. No, during the war Madame Shumanheink....

RN Was this after the first World War?

MN First World War. Saw that he got back home here to California. So she was quite a -- you don't remember her? I think she sang up until the 1930s, a great big big German lady. Well anyway, Aunt Jane was going to be accompanist for her but Aunt Jane's mother became ill so Aunt Jane stayed home and took care of her mother, and

took care of her dad until he died in 1925.

RN Well now, I left you on your honeymoon in Sacramento (laughter), but I think I'd like to continue that too because you haven't yet come to San Jose.

MN Well, after visiting in Sacramento, we came back down here to San Jose.

RN Now Sacramento at that time was the Capital of California. Did you visit anything there at that time regarding that?

MN Oh yes. My mother-in-law saw to it that we went through the capitol's grounds, we went through everything. She was a great promoter and so she saw to it that we went everywhere. And I was so tired and so hot that I don't think I really appreciated it too much (laughter).

RN How about Sutter's Fort? Was it...

MN We went there too, went everywhere. She was sold on Sacramento.

RN How old was she at that time?

MN Well I would say she probably was in her fifties.

RN In her fifties. Good health?

MN Oh yeah. See, she and her husband had divorced and grandfather had built that house over on the corner of Hensley and Second for my father-in-law and Myrt; her name was Myrtle.

RN For your father-in-law who was? What was his name again?

MN His name was William, Little Willie.

RN William Noble.

MN Yeah, William Worden (laughter).

RN Okay.

MN So anyway, I got pregnant right away.

RN In Sacramento? (Laughter)

MN Yes and when I came down here....

RN How long were you in Sacramento?

MN Oh just a week or so. About just a week. And so when I came down here, Aunt Jane was so mortified she apologized to all the neighbors for me getting pregnant so soon.

RN Oh my!

MN I wasn't supposed to have but you know in Massachusetts there was a law that they couldn't give any information on birth control.

RN Oh yes I understand.

MN Anyway, we had a lovely daughter and they just loved her to death.

RN Well, were there any unusual adventures on your trip? Did the car break down? Was it difficult to....

MN Well I tell you what. We came through....

RN And if you were pregnant, you might have been....

MN I wasn't pregnant then, not until Sacramento. I tell you what, we came through the Dust Bowl and some of the worst parts of that trip was mud one foot to two feet up on your car.

RN My goodness!

MN And when you would go on a highway, you'd slurp to one side and the other and some of the cars would be down in the gully but there wasn't a spear of anything.

RN A spear?

MN Of any grass or anything, you know, just a Dust Bowl.

RN Now what highway was that?

MN Oh, we came right through the central, I forgot which it was.

RN Central. I'm not very good at _____ either (laughter).

MN Well I think some of the interesting things was that....

RN Well what states did you go through? That would kind of help.

MN We went through all the northern states. We went through Chicago.

RN Well, you went through Wyoming.

MN Wyoming, Illinois.

RN Illinois, and even that was Dust Bowl? Because I always think of the Dust Bowl down like Oklahoma and Arkansas and Texas.

MN Well the mud was there.

RN The mud was in Wyoming and wherever that route took you.

MN Well one of the interesting things was that we stopped at this little store and all the Indians were surrounding a pot bellied stove.

RN Where was....

MN That was exciting. That was in South Dakota.

RN In South Dakota. Do you know just about, any idea?

MN Well, it was just before you got to the Black Hills. So that was kind of exciting because I'd never seen an Indian and my folks had said, "Now don't drive at night 'cause you know there are Indians out there." (Laughter) I guess nobody had never left New England to come this far to California. So that I think that and probably

stopping off at the ranches in Lander, Wyoming and riding around rounding up cattle and...

RN Oh yes, what a wonderful introduction to the West, the Wild West.

(PAUSE)

RN This is Side 1 of Tape 2 (these words repeated twice).

Note: This has now been added to Tape 1, Side 2.

RN Coming out here from Massachusetts on your honeymoon to California, okay.

MN We were up in the Continental Divide and every time we went down the hill there was a gully and we hit that. Well in the back of our car we had put on the seat our trunk and some cooking equipment 'cause we were going to cook out on our way out. Well after about the eighth time that we hit that gully and those pots and pans hit my head I took them all and threw them out the window (laughter). I said, "I'm sick and tired of those things" because every time you went, that thing hit me in the back of the head. I said, "I'm not gonna have those pots and pans there anymore."

RN Now when you say a gully, it's like a dip in the road?

MN Oh yeah, a dip in the road. You would have a place where the water would run across.

RN Oh yes, to channel across.

MN And so I left the pots and pans.

RN Now what was the date again that you....?

MN 1934. We were going to cook out on the way out.

RN And this was September. This was the rainy season. That's why there was so much mud.

MN Yeah. So anyway, that was kind of funny. We just left them all.

RN To look back on; I don't think it was funny at the time.

MN Well, I thought it was funny at the time. (Laughter)
Well see, I think I was so tired that maybe I didn't enjoy all the instances. I really should have taken a rest before I started. But my husband was anxious to come home. He hadn't been home for four years.

RN Yes, and you mean you really needed a rest after working

all summer and just getting married and then taking that trip.

MN It was a little bit more than -- so by the time that I came to San Jose I was quite thin. I think I weighed 89 pounds.

RN And how tall?

MN I was 5 foot 4. And the family thought, "My goodness, has somebody come here with TB." (Laughter) Well anyway, we came down. It says here, "How did you happen to come to San Jose." Well of course I got married and my husband's home was in San Jose. So we came to visit to be with his aunt who lived at 424 North Third Street.

RN 424 North Third Street.

MN That's here, the family home, and we were welcomed, a little bit coolly I think. But anyway, that was during the Depression and not only did my husband and I live here but Mr. Bates, who had married Jeanette, his daughter....

RN Now Jeanette was your....

MN Husband's aunt.

RN Husband's aunt, was your father-in-law's sister?

MN Right.

RN And his name was?

MN Yeah. So it was during the Depression. There was the father-in-law, who was William Worden, there was the aunt, who was Jeanette Noble Bates, my husband and I and Uncle Fred, that's Mr. Bates, Uncle Fred's daughter and her little boy. There were seven of us that lived in this house.

RN Well now, Uncle Fred Bates just married Jeanette but he had been married before?

MN Right.

RN And he had a daughter.

MN Daughter and she had a little boy.

RN And how old was the daughter at that time?

MN Well she was about 21 or 22.

RN And then the little boy?

MN The boy was about, oh he was an infant, very little, just walking. So there were seven of us here. So we came and the aunt had had a terrible back problem and she had a housekeeper.

RN This is Jeanette?

MN Jeanette. And so when I came the housekeeper left and I helped with the cooking and so forth for all seven people.

RN That's quite a bit especially being pregnant.

MN Then I found out that I was pregnant and I was beside myself. I didn't find out until I got to San Jose. Well anyway....

RN What did your husband do?

MN Well he had some money. His grandfather had left him some money so we had a little bit of money that we supported ourselves. Well it was almost impossible to

get a job at that time. He and his father worked in the canneries, they did whatever they could find to do and eventually....

RN Now, my understanding was that it was his grandfather that had the money that established this house.

MN Yeah, and it was the son and the daughter who -- the daughter got the home.

RN Jeanette got the home.

MN But Willie, we call him Willie....

RN This is your father-in-law?

MN He would come and stay too. During the Depression people just did not have a place to stay so we all were in one home.

RN Oh I see, and so your father-in-law what did he do for a living? Anything he could?

MN Well at that time, they worked in the canneries. Prior to that time he had a garage over on First Street, the Noble Garage, and then during the....

RN Do you know where it was located?

MN Right oh about in the 300 block right near the railroad track. In fact, if you went right through here. And he also had locomobiles that Bigley bought from him; they were the hearses. And he picked up hundreds and hundreds of bodies during the flu epidemic and he made quite a bit of money on that, and he invested in apartment houses in San Francisco. Well the Depression came along and he lost the apartment houses. So he was without a job. But Uncle Fred worked for the telephone company.

RN That's Bates, that's Jeanette's husband.

MN Worked for the telephone company and eventually my husband got on with the telephone company. But in the meantime, he became very discouraged. The Noble family had some people in the oil business, in the Chevron oil business and he went for an interview for a job and the man says, "Someone of your standard wouldn't want to have a service station job." See, they still considered him a grandson of a rich man. And he said, "I would have died to have had it." But anyway, he eventually got a job with the telephone company. But going back....

RN When you first arrived here.

MN First arrived, here was this enormous big home. Well I was used to big homes 'cause we had a big home, all my friends had big homes. And we did not have a washing machine and we had this new baby and everything was washed by hand and the laundry was in the basement so that we'd go to the basement, put the laundry down the laundry chute, do the laundry and hang it out in the back yard. And when it was raining, we took it to the third floor and dried it in the attic so that that was quite an undertaking to do that washing. And Aunt Jane of course was very helpful. At first they weren't too keen about me having a baby but they loved her and we got along very well. She was a good cook and I helped with the cooking.

RN There was no help at that time for this big house?

MN No but there were five bedrooms to be made up every day and the house rolled every day and dusted every day.

RN (Laughing) That didn't leave you much time for anything.

MN No, one day I wanted to take a nap but I was told, "We don't nap." So I never dared ask; I should have been taking a nap every day but I didn't.

RN Even with the new baby?

MN Yeah.

RN Oh my!

MN Even while I was pregnant. Well anyway, going back to Uncle Fred, he was a wonderful man and we had become acquainted with his sister back East.

RN Uncle Fred Bates.

MN Yeah, and his sister was a wonderful -- she was a school teacher. And so Bill got to know her while he was back East.

RN Prior to your getting married.

MN Yeah. So we used to go visit her; she was a school teacher and a marvelous person so that I got....

RN What was her name?

MN Her name was Mildred McCarthy.

RN How do you spell that?

MN M-c-C-a-r-t-h-y. So I got to know the family through

her, she knew them, you know, the Nobles. Anyway, the family weren't too keen about us having a second child so we wanted a boy so I got pregnant again and so we decided we wanted to move. And we moved to Santa Clara for a short time.

RN Where?

MN Right on Hilmar Street right off of....

RN My goodness, I didn't know there was a Hilmar Street then because I was born in Santa Clara and I know where Hilmar is.

MN Right there the first house. But in the meantime -- well I was gonna say, Uncle Fred was a fisherman and we spent practically every weekend at _____ River or over to Santa Cruz or on the coast or we'd go for a vacation up salmon fishing and they bought a little trailer so we'd take off in the trailer.

RN Oh, how wonderful, and what year was that?

MN That was in 1935 and '36.

RN Now that's fairly new, the trailers, weren't they?

MN Oh yeah, that was one of the first though. It was a land yacht, I always called it "land yacht."

RN A land yacht?

MN Yeah, they called it a land yacht. But we went to Big Basin, we went to Big Sur and we used to camp up at Lake Tahoe so we really had a wonderful, wonderful time. Well in the meantime, Uncle Fred had a heart attack and a ruptured appendix and died. And they had already redone the downstairs because they didn't want the whole house, so the Aunt wanted to know if we wanted to finish the upstairs so that's how we happened to come back and finish off the upstairs for an apartment.

RN Then the aunt never had any children?

MN No, no, she enjoyed our children. So that that was really a fun time with Uncle Fred and with all of them.

RN What year did he die?

MN 1941, he was very concerned about the war. He was a lineman with the telephone company and he did a lot of this work with these pneumatic jacks, you know and so forth. But he had a terrible heart attack working on one

of those.

RN Well you know, it sounds to me that when you first came to San Jose you were so occupied with being pregnant and cleaning house and cooking that you really didn't do anything else and so your attitude was only based on the family here about San Jose.

MN Yeah, I was going to tell you that I would tell people I was living with a family and they said, "How could you?" And I said, "Everybody I knew had their extended family." I said, "I didn't think anything of it." But socially I did not do too much until I had a neighbor that invited me to join a club of ten ladies and their husbands and that took me out into the community and we're still meeting; 55 years ago we formed and we still meet once a month.

RN Oh, that is fantastic.

MN So, it was my neighbor that invited me. In the meantime when the children went to school, then I started Girl Scout work. I was a Scout Leader and a trainer, a volunteer trainer, and directed one of the day camps as a volunteer. And then a lady came and they needed an assistant in the Girl Scout office so I applied for the

job and I took training at Stanford for Professional Girl Scouting and that's how I happened to get interested in the Girl Scout program. I was in charge of all the training, the day camps -- training of the adults.

RN Oh. What territory did this take?

MN Well, it was part of San Jose. At that time, Los Gatos had their own Girl Scout organization, Palo Alto had theirs and Mountain View. They all had their own little unit. Later on they all joined together.

RN Did you have a particular name or anything?

MN Ours was San Jose Girl Scouts, Inc.

RN I see, and what year was this?

MN That was between 1946 and 1960.

RN Oh, that was a great deal of time.

MN Yeah, I put 15 years on the Girl Scout staff. I was in charge of the training of all adults.

RN Adults?

MN The adults. You know, the leaders, the camp directors, the camp counselors. I was in charge of the cookie sale, the calendar sales, worked on the budgets.

RN Oh my. Well it seems to me that should be our main theme here I would think.

MN Yeah, well that was a good part of my life at that time. And when the counselors all joined, they didn't need four executives so another girl got the job and then they went on and they have one big central Girl Scout organization here. See, originally I always wanted to be in Girl Scout work.

RN Uh huh, and at Stanford when you took that training, do you remember who the teachers were or....

MN The teachers were from the national Girl Scout office and it was a month's training.

RN A month's training. Did you have to provide your own transportation?

MN Yeah, I used to go up every day.

RN And did you drive, yourself?

MN Yes. I came home and got my husband's supper and went back afterwards. The rest of them stayed up there.

RN Oh, the supper was in the evening or was it in daytime?

MN Right here in the evening.

RN My goodness, that was dedication.

MN But he didn't want me to go so I did it, you know. I traveled back and forth. He wasn't too keen about it. In fact, the Noble family were not too keen about me working; no Noble lady worked. So I told my husband that I had just about made as many things out of orange crates and apple boxes as could be made and that I really wanted to get out because the children, you know, worked. I never would have gone to work if we hadn't lived here. I never would have left my children but there was always I worked part-time while they were in school and there was always somebody here, the grandfather or the aunt. They never came home to an empty home.

RN Well now when you say you worked, at what at this time?

MN At the Girl Scouts.

RN At the Girl Scouts, okay. So you were actually paid at this time.

MN Oh yeah, a paid staff member organizing troops, organizing the summer day camps. When I got through I had 19 day camps and I used to direct some of them. You can name any part of Santa Clara Valley and we had a camp there, in Saratoga, Los Gatos.

RN Well, where were some of the places where the camps were? Were they at parks?

MN We had one at Alum Rock Park, Stevens Creek Park, then there was some private property in Saratoga.

RN Now was this camp just day camps?

MN Day camps. The children would come and they would do things in camp that they would....

RN Crafts?

MN Crafts, cooking, hiking, just living, living the camp situation, not like they do now. They take them out to all the different sports, they call it camp but it isn't. They did in the daytime what you would do if you stayed

overnight. One of the things that they liked best was making ice cream. I had learned to make ice cream in a coffee can.

RN Oh, I have no idea. How do you make ice cream in a coffee can (laughter)?

MN Well, you take a coffee can and then you put a smaller one inside. You put the ice cream inside and the salt and the ice on the outside and you keep turning the can and pretty soon you have ice cream, and the kids used to just love that.

RN Rock salt?

MN Rock salt on the outside, yeah like a regular. Instead of having a freezer, ice cream freezer, we used to do it in little tin cans. We'd put the ingredients....

RN You didn't have to have it cold?

MN Well, the ingredients were put in the inside can.

RN Which would be what?

MN Well, a mixture that we had, I forgot what it was.

RN It would be cream.

MN Cream and stuff and then you would put the rock salt and the ice on the outside just like you would a big freezer and they would keep turning it with their hand.

RN You see I come from another world where everything is done under refrigeration. Or I thought you had to have ice.

MN Well you did. We had ice and the rock salt.

RN Oh, the ice and the rock salt. Okay, I didn't hear ice there.

MN Yeah, we just had little miniature freezers. And they used to love that. And then they'd go for an overnight sometimes, they'd stay over at Stevens Creek. So that was an interesting time.

RN It was wonderful for your girls. Did they accompany you?

MN Oh yeah.

RN You had a girl and a boy. I'm sorry.

MN Yes. Barbara used to go as a Junior Counselor, and all

the little boys -- she'd take care of all the pre-school kids. All the little boys wanted to marry her.
(Laughter)

RN Well now, when was she born? I don't think we got the date.

MN She was born in 1935.

RN And her birth date?

MN Is on June 30th, my mother's birthday.

RN Well, isn't that interesting.

MN And my son was born in June too so that....

RN In what year?

MN He was born in 1939.

RN And are they both alive?

MN Oh yeah. Yeah my son has a trailer out back here. He's the one that helped me restore the house. So anyway, that whole time of camping was a delight to me because

well I'd take the counselors on an overnight and we'd do all the things that they were gonna do with the children. And I think perhaps that was one of the contributions that I had for the children during that time, was the training of the adults, because I think we had close to 6,000 girls in Scouts at that time I was working with them. And I feel that a lot of the training that I gave the leaders was passed on to the children. Every once in a while I'll see some of the girls and they say, "Oh, Mrs. Noble, where's your uniform?" (Laughter) So that that was a wonderful time of my life. I just enjoyed it. I used to go out at night and train up at the churches and train in the schools.

RN Now I'm not sure what I should ask here, but it seems like I could use some practical, maybe -- what did you train them to do?

MN You train them to be a Girl Scout leader.

RN And that would be how to go on a hike or....

MN Well no, it would be to interpret the Girl Scout program to the children, the activities for the children, crafts and what the Girl Scout organization stood for, take them on hikes, get them interested in camping, and have a

meeting each week, plan their program. And also we had to organize the groups too; you'd have to get the mothers together which now mothers are all working. You'd get the mothers together and they would form a committee and they'd get a leader and a co-leader, find a place to -- we'd have to contact the schools for a place for them to have their meetings.

RN I remember I was never part of any organization like that but my daughter was a Campfire Girl so I do remember something about meeting. They met at someone's home, the Campfire Girls met in someone's home.

MN Well we met in the schools. In fact, I went to PTA one time and I said, "Well, when my daughter gets old enough I'd be a Scout leader." Well I tell you what, I was snapped up just like that (laughter) so that that's where my scouting started. I mean it stopped back in New England but it started again out here when she was about seven, seven years old. The girl that was the Executive Director -- they called us Field Directors in those days, we were out in the field all the time (laughter), that's always a laugh. We're still good friends, she lives in Tacoma.

RN And who is she?

MN She was the one that hired me.

RN What is her name?

MN Her name was Peterson, Margaret Peterson. Well she didn't actually hire, but she recommended, me. They had a Board of Directors, Girl Scout Board of Directors.

RN And this was all when your daughter was seven?

MN About seven, uh huh, till she got out of high school. So we became fast friends. The reason that I got the job, her husband had just come home from the service and he was going to San Jose State and they didn't know any place to live and we found an apartment two doors down so I became acquainted. And we had a wonderful life because every weekend we went somewhere; we took the children, the two dogs they went with us, and we'd go to Yosemite or we'd go to Lake Tahoe and we cooked on the ground _____ in a restaurant.

(Pause.)

RN Now you said you slept on the ground.

MN Yeah. Well we bought those sleeping bags for \$7.00 a piece; they were the Arctic sleeping bags that they had used in the war. And so we would take those....

RN This must have been the Second World War then.

MN Second World War. And so I said to Margaret, she was the Executive Director and the one that went on our trips every weekend, I said, "You know I've dug enough holes for my hip and my shoulder, let's get air mattresses." So then we went and bought air mattresses and that was just like sleeping on a cloud.

RN Oh, I didn't know they had them in those days.

MN Oh yeah, they did. So we just did many many trips. Well, the husband finished college so they went back to Wyoming and we visited their family many times so that friendship has been ever since 1940. See, she came here when I was a volunteer and then I went on the staff and that was a wonderful part of my life because I just loved the organization and I loved what it stood for and my contribution, I think, had a lot to do with it. Besides, it was nice to have a little extra money (laughter).

RN Oh yes, it's wonderful when you can work at something and receive a monetary reward and love what you're doing.

MN Well, our summer camps were very successful. We used every park that was available: Alum Rock Park, we used

Stevens Creek, we used private property and some place over there on the way over to Santa Cruz. I'd get up real early in the morning....

RN Felton?

MN No. They had _____ camp.

RN Mount Herman?

MN No, there was another place that they had a day camp.

RN Camp Campbell?

MN I can't think of the name of it.

RN Camp Beavers?

MN No, Redwood Estates.

RN Redwood Glen area?

MN Redwood Estates.

RN Redwood Estates, okay.

MN So we even had a camp there. And I'd get up early in the morning and with the station wagon and it meant packing all the equipment for the whole day up and down the hills, up and down the hills, so I spent a great deal of time in the out-of-doors.

RN You're so tiny I can't even imagine this (laughter).

MN Well, I wasn't that small then. But that was a lot of fun, I enjoyed that. And of course we always had the calendar sale and the cookie sales and we were very lucky that we had many many volunteers. See, they were a very small staff but many volunteers and they helped to set up all the different events. If there was a cookie sale, there'd be a neighborhood cookie chairman and then there would be a person with each troop so that....

RN Well I can see how you went from Scouts into the Salvation Army because the Scouts were something like a....

MN Yeah, well I was a _____ because this was a nutrition program that I worked with, with the Salvation Army. That's another long story.

RN So then I think your big contribution was several years

with the....

MN Fifteen years with the Girl Scouts. Then I also worked on politics, I worked on the Community Chest, I also have some kind of an award in helping San Jose become a better city, oh and I did....

RN And that's really something they'd be interested in.

MN Yeah, I have that here.

RN Well, what we'll do is stop now and we'll continue with the award that you received for helping establish....

MN Oh yeah, well I was -- going back to awards, I had a letter of commendation and was the first one to get a Golden Eaglet, which is the highest award in Girl Scouting, when I was a girl. I was very active in Girl Scouts as a girl. And also I got a letter of commendation from the San Jose....

RN Now, you were active in Girl Scouts as a girl back in Massachusetts.

MN Oh yeah, all the time from the time I was 11 until I graduated from college and got married then I took time

off from Scouting, had children, then went back into Scouting again.

RN And so you received this award, what was it called?

MN The Golden Eaglet.

RN The Golden Eaglet.

MN That's the highest like the Boy Scouts get an Eagle Scout. And I got that as a girl.

RN Do you remember how old you were, what year it was?

MN Oh yeah, I was four years, oh about 14 or 15.

RN I can see you'd be proud.

MN I couldn't find it, but it's in solid gold. I should get it out and wear it.

RN I should say, anything solid gold today (laughter).

MN Well they gave out gold things. The other creative thing that I was always interested in was costuming.

RN Oh my, your sewing again came back into play.

MN Well, from the time I was little if they said a party and it needed a costume I was there with it and I usually got a prize, but that's another whole story that all through my life I made costumes.

RN Do you know for what particular group you made costumes for, any names of places, groups in San Jose?

MN Well, first of all, in our town they had a masked ball.

RN Now this is back in Massachusetts?

MN Massachusetts. A masked ball and everybody dressed until Prohibition and they didn't allow them to wear masks anymore. And my grandfather was in charge of this dance.

RN Now this masked ball was the city?

MN The whole town.

RN The whole town!

MN They came from all over Massachusetts to go to it.

RN Oh, how interesting. That's at Millis?

MN In Millis, Mass. And so my sister and I the first time went as Little Red Riding Hood and my mother always went and she.... (Ends in mid-sentence)

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 2

TAPE 2, SIDE 1

MN And so perhaps one of the first prizes I got, they had a Depression Dance so I had made myself a dress out of burlap bags and lined it with cotton ban(?) and then made necklaces out of vegetables and so....

RN (Laughter) So this was a Depression Dance not necessarily during the Depression.

MN Oh yes it was.

RN Oh it was during the Depression.

MN So I decided I wasn't gonna wear the costume. Well I went to the dance then I decided I'd go home and there was three feet of snow and I walked all the way home, put on the dress, came back and I got a a ten dollar gold piece. (Laughter)

RN My! I wonder what that would be worth today, at least \$200.

MN Oh, I _____ passed it in.

(PAUSE)

RN Side No. 2 or the B Side of Tape No. 2. Interview of Mildred S. Noble.

RN Depression Dance.

MN And the costuming.

RN And the costuming and what year was this? This is back in Millis, Massachusetts.

MN Oh yes. This was about 1928. So when we went to camp, there was always a costume party but nobody ever told me to bring anything from home and everybody would have these nice costumes. So I got the idea that I would make costumes for my tentmate and myself. I made baby costumes, I took Turkish towels and made a baby dress, took the face cloth and made a little bonnet out of them and we both got prizes.

RN (Laughter) And how old were you then?

MN Oh I was probably about 14 or 15. But I always seemed to
_____ some of the other costuming that I think had
it not been the Depression and had I not married, I would
like to have gone into staging and costuming because at
my experience in summer camps I made all the costumes for
their big parades they had and festivals, and they used
to have a lot of water activities and I'd make the -- if
they were needed by somebody -- with a hat or something
like that. I might have gone into that field.

RN And so aside from the Girl Scouting that you did provide
costuming, perhaps when your children were in plays or
whenever and is there any group that you worked for
particularly on a volunteer basis?

MN No, only through the camp program if they were going to
have a water pageant, then I'd be in charge of the
costuming for the water pageant.

RN Well, I've really enjoyed today with you, Mildred.

MN Well, I hope it's not too rambling.

RN I don't know but I'm so interested I can't imagine
anybody transcribing not being interested. And what
we'll do is just stop now and we'll start....

MN I kind of got the idea....
(Both RN and MN talking. Could not sort out voices)
....a little better organized.

Pause.

RN Testing 1,2,3 testing. We may be having a little problem
with the microphone, testing.
Okay, now if you'd like to check your voice.

MN Yes, I wasn't aware that Ruth wasn't even born before
some of these activities that I participated in. The one
that she was interested in many of the things that we
wore and so forth.

RN I'm again testing without the microphone to see if
there's a difference.

MN I'm beginning to read to you something that I wrote back
in 1977 and had read to the group that I worked with at
the Salvation Army Nutrition site on Father's Day.

"The father figure in my life, my Grandpa Thorne, by
granddaughter Mildred Smith Noble. He was a young
grandpa when I first remembered him. He was busy with
farming and community activities. In the vernacular of
today, he was self employed. I don't recall him ever
saying, "I love you", but his activities spoke so loud.

He didn't need to say a word. He always had time for me. He was proud of my accomplishments.

"When he passed away at the age of 80, it was said he was the most loved man in our small New England farming town of Millis, Massachusetts. He was unique; he was different. There was not another person like him.

"He was a man who wore many hats. To some of the boys and girls in school my grandpa was Bill Thorne, the policeman, the truant officer, someone the mothers used to threaten them with if they didn't behave. He gave generously of his time to the young people in our community. When young boys got in trouble, instead of being sent to reform school they were offered work on grandpa's various routes. To the townspeople he was the elected Town Constable who held office for 55 consecutive years, the Laundry Man, the Sunday Paperman and the Fish Man on Friday. They knew him as the man who planned the annual Labor Day Clambake. He was often a cook for the monthly Chowders, New England bashes like most monthly California barbeques. To the animals, the cats and dogs, he was the kind Pound Man who took care of them on the farm until their owners claimed them. To his neighbors he was a good friend, a farmer who shared his produce and flowers with them each summer. He was always ready to

help whenever they needed him.

"To me he was my Grandpa. He, above anyone else, was the greatest influence in my growing-up years. He saw to it that I took advantage of all opportunities. At an early age I learned from him how to count money and to make change when I helped him with his laundry and Sunday paper routes. This way I had the opportunity to talk with customers, learn about people and was always assured of a summer job. From him I learned to knit string dishcloths on two sharpened pencils. This knitting skill I continued to develop and put to use in making my own clothes and later I taught others the same techniques. It was my grandfather who encouraged me to participate in all the community activities, to join the 4H Club, to join the Girl Scouts, and to go to college. He was always there to furnish transportation, supplies and to see that my friends were included. In my life, these experiences brought about several career opportunities.

"He had time to give and he gave it; that's what I call love. He was a fine man, a fine father figure, my grandpa, William Thorne."

RN

Well that was grand, that was really grand. Now let's see, I would like to go back and if you can tell me -- of

course this must have been told to you -- but about the time of your birth. We do have a description but not exactly where.

MN I was born August 20, 1911 on the staircase on Lavender Street in Millis, Massachusetts. I weighed in at 2 1/2 pounds and I don't believe anybody knew I was going to be coming. That my mother had already given birth to my sister nine months earlier and when my grandfather came up to visit my mother, which he often did -- that's Grandpa Thorne, her father -- he ran all the way home to tell the family what Daisy, that's what they called my mother, what she had there. So they took me and put me, wrapped me up in cotton battin' and olive oil and put me in a little shoe box and tucked me behind the wood stove to keep me warm. And later on my cousin said that they carried me around in a grape basket.

RN Well let's see now. You were the second child.

MN Yes.

RN And your sister was how old at the time you were born?

MN My sister was nine months old when I was born.

RN So it is possible your mother didn't know that she was even pregnant with you.

MN No, no.

RN Yes, that's interesting. And is your sister still alive?

MN My sister is very much alive. We're both the same age at this time; we're both 80. And we have a lot of fun with that. As children people would ask us how old we were. We'd say, "Well we're 10." "You're 10?" (Laughter) Well then we had to explain the difference. And she lives in Baltimore, has a very large family and....

RN How many children did she have?

MN Well she had three children, 13 grandchildren and 22 great grandchildren.

RN Oh my goodness.

MN So her family's been quite prolific.

RN Uh huh, I see. Did she go to college also?

MN Yes, she went to Boston University and she worked until

she was 72. She was a people person and a staff member with the County of Baltimore and she taught school for a good many years.

RN And there was something I wanted to go back on in regard to your husband, just a little more background. I know he was in the Marines, I believe that.

MN My husband, who was the grandson of the people who built this home, was born in San Jose over on the corner of Hensley and Second Street and he spent part of his childhood here in San Jose. The mother and father divorced and then she subsequently went to Sacramento.

RN Okay, do you mind repeating again his father and mother's names?

MN His mother was Myrtle Roberts Noble and she was a Darby which is a long time name here in San Jose.

RN A Garby?

MN A Darby D-a-r-b-y Darby.

RN D-a-r-b-y.

MN And the father's name was William Worden Noble.

RN Would you spell that word?

MN W-o-r-d-e-n.

RN (Laughter) okay, thank you.

MN And my husband was William Noble IV on all of his silver and all of his little bibs were that imprinted. So he spent many of his summers here in San Jose and he went to Stanford.

RN I see, then he had lived with his mother in Sacramento?

MN He had lived with his mother in Sacramento.

RN How old was he then when they were divorced?

MN Oh I think he must have been about seven or eight years old, yeah.

RN That's he and his sister?

MN No, this is my father-in-law.

RN (Laughter) I'm so sorry (laughter again).

MN Yeah this is my husband's mother and father.

RN Your husband's mother and father. Well I was under the impression that Jeanette was your husband's sister.

MN No, that's my father-in-law's sister.

RN Your father-in-law's sister. Okay thank you.

MN Yeah, it's confusing. So many, so many of us (laughter).

RN So many to keep straight.

MN So he went to Stanford and then he wanted to go into the Air Force to fly.

RN What year was this?

MN Well that was in 1927. He was a senior at Stanford and his mother rearranged months for him to go in and they cut out the air flight training so he was stuck with the Marines for four years so he spent four years in the Marines which was a wonderful training for him. And he came along to the East Coast on the USS Missouri and they

were docked in Philadelphia.

RN Then he went to the East Coast by way of the Pacific?

MN No by the Panama Canal.

RN Oh, I see.

MN So he had quite a bit of -- this was in peace time that he was in the service. And he always managed to get the good jobs; he was always the Admiral's orderly, I think because he had a gift of speech, you know, and he was a learned person, and so wherever he went he was always the Admiral's orderly; even when he went to the Boston Navy Yard he was the Admiral's orderly. And then I met him in 1933, no it was '32 I think it was. I was a junior in college and he had one more year to go.

RN What was his rate then?

MN I think he was a Private First Class, then he was something else but it dropped down when he moved. I don't know what the second rating was. They didn't have officers' training in those days but he was a _____.

RN Oh, I'm sure he would have been in officers'....

MN Well he had an opportunity of going to West Point but he chose Stanford. He was active in the R.O.T.C. in Sacramento. Anyway, he was very anxious to get home, that's why we had such a hurried (chuckle) honeymoon.

RN Okay, let's see now. This is kind of catching up a little bit more on what we talked about on the last tape.

MN See, the five generations that have lived here, it was the grandfather who was William Nathaniel....

RN Let's put this down.

Brief pause.

Now we stopped for a moment to get some correct spelling and there was something that you mentioned that wasn't taped about the name that you were given when you were born.

MN (Laughter) When I went back to get my birth certificate, there was my name Mildren Venus Smith. We've often laughed about it but it was changed to Verna when I was baptised. I don't know who put the name of Venus in there (chuckle) and I often wonder, would I have been a different person had they called me Venus.

RN Yes, that's interesting. Now the man -- I just want to

get this straight for whoever transcribes this -- the man who built this house in 1888 was.... You want to tell me who he was and which is....

MN Okay. The man who was responsible for clearing title to this Hensley Tract and built this what they call the -- what's the name of this type of house -- this Queen Anne home was William Nathaniel Noble and his wife Jennie Sheppard Noble, who had come from Lander, Wyoming for their daughter's health. The atmosphere was too rare in that high country. And they had two children; Jeanette was born in Sachett's Harbor, that's the _____ in New York, and the son, William Worden, was born on the Indian Reservation in Lander, Wyoming. They were about seven years old and the girl was seven years old when they came here and they lived at the San Jose Inn -- or what was that called before?

RN The St. James.

MN St. James Hotel on First Street when they first came here. It was their idea to go to Palo alto to live but the grandmother became interested in the work of the Methodist Church and stayed here. Now this gentleman, William Nathaniel Noble, was instrumental in helping to build the Elks Club and he established many of the young

men in business; one famous one was Jay McCabe who had a hat store here for a good many years.

RN We can now.... Break in sentence and pause.

MN William Worden Noble had a son William Roberts Noble and William Worden was married to Myrtle Roberts and William Roberts Noble is the man that I married and I had two children Worden Thorne Noble and Barbara Jane Noble. All of these people have lived in this Queen Anne home.

RN Thank you. Okay, also Jeanette -- well, we won't go into that (laughter). There's just so much history here. It's so difficult to confine it to some one subject. Now we, I think, covered everything.

MN We had her being a concert pianist.

RN Oh yes.

MN Which was quite a tribute to the community, quite a benefit to the community.

RN That's right and that's correct and when we talked before there was a couple of things that we didn't quite remember. One was what the name of the conservatory of

music was. Now we're speaking about....

MN Now we're talking about Jeanette Noble Keesling Bates.

RN Yeah, her name was Jeanette Noble Keesling Bates and this was your....

MN Father-in-law's sister.

RN Father-in-law's sister. Okay we'll get that down.

MN And Jeanette contributed quite a bit to the community. As a little girl she went to King's Conservatory of Music on North Second Street where the Germania Hall is right now. And she went I guess several times a week and practiced and practiced and practiced and she played for all the school activities and when she graduated from high school they gave her a picture of a little girl playing the piano which is hanging in my hall.

RN Okay, I think there was one other thing that you had told me that we didn't get on tape and that was the fact that she was the youngest graduate ever....

MN Yeah. College of the Pacific was here in San Jose. She was the youngest graduate of that college in Music

Education.

RN Okay, and then I just have a couple questions regarding our last session and I believe it was in the early '30's when you went to college. I wasn't sure now if it's -- would you like to spell it, the college is in Framingham

MN Framingham.

RN Um hmm, Framingham.

MN Framingham, yeah. I went to a state teachers college, the oldest one in the United States (chuckle). Framingham F-r-a-m-i-n-g-h-a-m, Massachusetts. It was purely a teachers' college and it was not co-educational although it is now. There were about 400 people in the whole college.

RN And it was located where?

MN It was located in Framingham, Massachusetts.

RN And then when you, through the college -- the way I understand, it was part of the college curriculum the camp?

MN No.

RN No that wasn't, see.

MN No, you confused them. In the summertime, through my contacts with the Girl Scouts, I got positions as counselors in summer camps in New York.

RN Okay, and then the name of the camp in New Hampshire was?

MN Gilmingtton. That's where I went as a young girl. In fact, I went there four summers and then I went as Junior Counselor in Waltham, Massachusetts, and then I went on to another camp in the Catskill Mountains.

RN Okay, and then there was another question I had when you were describing your grandmother and grandfather. You were raised by your great grandmother but your grandmother left your grandfather and they were divorced....

MN Fifty years later (laughter).

RN Fifty not 15.

MN Fifty.

RN Fifty years later." Okay.

MN See my mother was taken ill when I was 11 years old so that period on through the teenage was the time that -- well actually the family, the grandparents helped 'cause my mother worked -- so they were always there to help us with whatever needed to be helped.

RN Did your mother pass away from the illness?

MN Yes, tuberculosis.

RN Okay, well you know what I think I'd like to do is maybe touch a little bit on what we have here on your biographical information and then really get into the Salvation Army part. I noticed here your interest in activities: gardening, herbs, reading, political issues, food cooking, cultural activities, theater, concerts, church, Unitarian Preservation Association. You belong to the....

MN Victorian.

RN Not Unitarian, Victorian (laughter). Gosh! Okay, the Victorian Preservation Association, that's in regard to this house?

MN Yes, this whole area is a historical area.

RN The Hensley Tract?

MN The Hensley Historical Area.

RN Yes, I should have realized that.

MN I was going to mention how I happened to start to work with the Salvation Army.

RN Well, I just want to get a few other things and then we're just going to devote the whole time to the Salvation Army. What are the Dicks Femmes?

MN Oh, that is....

RN This is part of organizations you belong to.

MN Ten old ladies and their husbands had got together back in 1938 and they're still meeting 55 years later.

RN Isn't that wonderful.

MN We meet once a month and we plan an activity. Like I'm going to have them here in February and then we plan

something. Well we used to have big dinners and we did a lot of cooking. Now nobody wants to cook so we go out to eat.

RN (Laughter) Well I understand that. And then you belong to the California Pioneers and the Farmington Club of Northern....

MN Framingham.

RN Framingham. Why do I keep wanting to say Farmington?

MN Well, it's a name that you're not familiar with.

RN Okay, the Framingham Club of Northern California, uh huh. What is that?

MN Well, those are all alumnis from the college that I belong to. They came out here to teach; they're dietitians, they're teachers. They would come out here to get a job and they'd go back there and I'd have them just like that because it's a teachers' college.

RN How lovely. Well, now I notice that you also belong to this Salvation Army Home League and that you've been very active with their nutrition program. And I just want to

sit back and, you know, somehow you can just....

MN Well, I thought maybe I'd give a little bit of background.

RN Sure.

MN You know, all through my married life I was never ill and the children used to say, "But Mama you're never sick." Well, in 1970 I was at Yosemite riding a bicycle and I went to fall and I hurt my hip. So when I came home, I was going to have the walnut tree trimmed but I had a lot of potted plants and the man says, "You have to move all those." So I moved all those and the next day I couldn't move so I went to the doctor and he diagnosed me. He said, "You know, you have something that you're supposed to get when you're 90." And I said, "What's that?" He said, "Osteoporosis." So I had a terrible, terrible back problem, excruciating, I could hardly walk. Well anyway....

RN Excuse me, but how old were you about this time?

MN That was in 1970 that I was 60.

RN Oh yes.

MN Sixty, 61. And so I was really laid up for a long time and my husband had to help me. Well I hardly ever went out of the house and I could hardly walk except to go for treatments. So I had this backache which was just terrible and then they examined me and found out I had uterine cancer so I thought, "Oh my." I said to my daughter when she told me, I said, "You know I'm not afraid of dying but I'm not ready and when I die I want to be pretty, I don't want to be all wrinkled up." And I said, "Now isn't that silly. Don't worry about how you're going to look when you die." Well anyway, I went for the 35 treatments with this terrible back up to the Valley Medical and then I waited about six months and had a hysterectomy.

RN Well, what kind of treatments did they give you?

MN Cobalt. This was the first time that they did cobalt before they operated. And so I waited about six months and I had a hysterectomy and I came home with my daughter. She got a hospital bed and so we did all our Christmas shopping and then the next day my husband died.

RN Why? Was he ill?

MN Yeah, he had had a heart attack. And he died and so

there I was with a bad back and a hysterectomy and couldn't walk. Well in the meantime, I had a friend that stayed at my home, a college friend, so I knew that my house was safe and then when I got to feeling better my daughter said, "It's about time you go home." So I went home and....

RN Now when you say your house was safe this is the house you're talking about where you're living now?

MN Yeah, yes, here. She was staying here, 424 North Third Street. So I came home and I said, "Well I suppose I ought to sit down and bawl but I'm not going to." I said to myself, "God knows what I need without me even asking." And so I went to go off the back steps and I sprained my hip again and I was in the hospital again and the nurse, when they examined me on the table, pulled me up and I had seventeen fractures. Now I had never had all this pain before. Well anyway, I finally came home and a neighbor noticed that I was having trouble walking and she said, "You know, I think you might enjoy going down to Town Park Towers. They have a nutrition program there." So it took me about 30 minutes to walk two blocks and then she said, "You know, I think you'd enjoy the Salvation Army." So I went over there and....

RN And they're located very near there.

MN Yeah, the Salvation Army was only a half a block away from where I live. So I went over and I sat down at a different table just to hear people's voices and I noticed that there were a lot of people running around waiting on tables and I said to Marian Rudd -- and she was so gracious and kind and made me feel so welcome -- I said, "You know, I wouldn't mind teaching some knitting." and so she came back and she said, "Well how would you like to get a group together and make a thousand bed socks?"

RN Oh my goodness! Excuse me, I do want to ask you, were you eating at the Nutrition Program? You were going there for your meals?

MN Yes.

RN Okay. Sorry to interrupt.

MN They had established this Nutrition Program. I wasn't around when they passed out the folders to let us know that this new program under the Older American Act was being set up at the Salvation Army. So anyway, I went down there and pretty soon I got the socks done

(laughter).

RN How many again?

MN A thousand bed socks (laughter) one year. And so the lady who was the director of the program was having difficulty keeping records so they hired me in 1975 to keep the records and to be the program director. And so I worked at that part-time and then that director left and Ivona Stilwell became the director and she was a....

RN What was her name again?

MN Ivona Stilwell.

RN Ivona?

MN Ivona Stilwell. Her husband's family were the ones that established a Salvation Army program here in San Jose, Stilwells. And so then....

Pause.

RN Testing, testing 1,2,3. This is Tape No. 3, Side 1, Side A. The interviewer is Ruth Noseworthy, the interviewee is Mildred Smith Noble. This is the third tape and we're starting to talk about Mildred's experiences in the Salvation Army. This is continued from Side 2 or the B

side of Tape No. 2.

Duplicate Tape 2 Side 1 continues.

RN And so now, Mildred, you had just really started to tell us about your involvement and the Stilwells were the ones that established the Salvation....

MN In San Jose.

RN San Jose. Do you have any idea what year that was because I remember the Salvation Army near Locust.

MN I think it was about 1890; it was before 1900.

RN Oh yes it was and it was the Stilwells?

MN Uh hmm.

RN The lady that you actually....

MN Oh no, no. She was the granddaughter-in-law.

RN The granddaughter-in-law because my experience with the Salvation Army was they never stayed very long in one place.

MN When they were young. _____ five
different corps locations _____.

RN You see (laughter) Okay, would you want to go on then
again?

MN Well, I think I was saying that Ivona Stilwell, whose
husband's grandfather established the Salvation Army here
in San Jose....

RN Just a minute. I want to make.... Pause

MN So in 1975 I was hired by the Salvation Army Corps
officer and at the moment I can't think of the name of
the lady that did but she's since retired. And that
first year I was sent to San Francisco to a training
class for exercises for senior citizens and I went up two
days on the train and came back and established an
exercise program.

RN And this was through the Salvation Army? They taught in
San Francisco?

MN Well no, it was some organization that was putting it on;
I forgot who it was, it was something to do with senior
programs.

RN I see, probably through the city maybe?

MN Oh yeah and so in the meantime I had started to take water exercises at Tympani Pool and so I thought, "My goodness, am I ever gonna be able to teach this." So I went around....

RN Excuse me, can you describe Tympani Pool a little bit, where it is?

MN Tympani Pool is associated with the City, I believe. The City rents a portion of the swimming area for senior citizens or for people who have health problems.

RN And it's a hot water.

MN And it's nice warm water and an excellent program. And they also cater to the handicapped children.

RN I think the water's like 90 degrees.

MN Yeah, I love it that way. Anyway, so to become better at doing exercise, I went around and visited different classes, took different kinds of training myself. So I got my class all organized and they said, "Now write out everything you're going to do." So we were going to have

the exercises outdoors so I brought my little tape recorder and my cards and that first day I was sort of nervous. And you know what? The wind came along and blew all the cards away and I forgot to hook up the tape recorder (laughter). So I had done enough exercise that it had become a part of me so I felt very confident in translating this to the other people. Well, I had classes of about 10 or 15 people outdoors and then later on I was asked to serve as a counselor at camp. You see, the Salvation Army provides through their regional office in San Francisco a summer camp for seniors five days over at Redwood Glen, which is between here and Santa Cruz, a beautiful spot. Well I just became infatuated with that visitors' day in 1977. In the meantime, I had broken my leg so I went over with crutches and I just fell in love with the place 'cause you know camping was really my field. So every year, except one or two, I had served as a counselor for the seniors doing their exercise program, both water and the ground one. And then in the meantime, I still taught before I retired. Every Monday morning I had a class on armchair exercises, meditation, etc. at the Salvation Army. That along with all my other activities of keeping records, attending conferences, attending meetings. And perhaps the first contact I had with the Salvation Army was many years ago when they were located on San Fernando Street. My children were not old

enough to go into Scouts so they had a summer program and I sent my children to the Salvation Army summer program. And the other people that I came in contact with were through general meetings of, you know, the Community Chest and all those activities that you have when you're an executive in an organization. So I didn't know really too much about the Salvation Army except they moved into the community here between North Third and Fourth Street, which had been a great big warehouse where the trains used to bring in all the pears, and they took down that awful building which was so scary and built what they called the Citadel which was located here at 359 North Fourth Street. So that it has been a very pleasant experience. You know, they often change their officers and I've worked under five different corps officers. Just get used to one and then they move on. The first one that left I couldn't face saying goodbye (chuckle), but after that I realized that they make a commitment that they move wherever they're placed and they certainly are one of the hardest working organizations that I know of. Of course I know more about them having worked with them. Even after they retire, they're called Officers Carrie or Joan. First of all they're a church very much like the Methodist Church. It was formulated by their founder and many of the principles of the Methodist Church are seen in this Salvation Army Church. They also

serve family services, they have a department where people and get help through welfare. They also have a house on North First Street which people in the neighborhood do not care too much about where the transients come and have a bed for a night and they also train some of the people who have come out of prison, train them to do a job like painting or keeping up lawns, and so forth so they can go out and get a job. And they also have a place over on Stockton and Taylor where it's a rehabilitation section for people who are alcoholics. And they also have their store there and the people who live there work in the stores until they can get themselves pulled together, then they go out into the community and become a part of the community.

RN From over the years, have you seen any changes in the way they do charitable work? Have you worked with any other organizations like there's the Fishes and the Loaves, Loaves and Fishes or something, and there are some over....

MN Well, I think the Salvation Army has a pattern. You know, they send their cadets to four years training to learn the principles of Salvation Army, the methods of working with people and handling big affairs. You'll notice that whenever there's an earthquake or a fire or

When the last earthquake hit....

RN Which one was that?

MN That was the one in 1987, was it?

RN In October....

MN October of '87.

RN Was that '87? I thought that was '89. Whenever.

MN Whenever it was. They not only organized the corps here but they went down into Watsonville and all the other areas and helped them because they didn't know how to organize. They can put together things faster and do more work in a short time. They have a van that goes out that prepares coffee, they serve doughnuts and sandwiches and every time there's a big catastrophe they're right there with volunteers coming in and helping with the food. That is set up to go right now.

RN The part you played in the Nutrition Program was what?

MN The Salvation Army was the contracting agency to provide this program under the Older American Act.

this program under the Older American Act.

RN What is the Older....

MN Older American Act of 1966 was that they would have these types of programs for seniors.

RN And funded by what? The state?

MN Funded by the federal government and the state. Here in Santa Clara Valley it was established in 19 -- let's see, 1971 -- and the first time that they had a meeting here there were 11 people that attended and the office staff waited on table and then it graduated. In fact, this was the second one in Santa Clara Valley, the Nutrition Program. There are 25 of them now in different centers. And so the Salvation Army being the contracting agency does the hiring of the staff and works with them and you become a part of all the Salvation Army. They want you to know that you are a part of it. I always thought we worked for the county but the last officer said, "No you work for the Salvation Army." See, the Catholic Social Services has three or four centers of which they are the contracting agency. Some churches have the Santa Clara Center in Santa Clara, they have a center there. Now St. James Center is backed by the City so it's sort of farmed

out to different agencies to see that this program exists. And so it's been a marvelous program; the seniors come and the main thing is to have a lunch, a nice hot lunch and program. We've had many fine programs, costume parties, and we don't have any dances because the Salvation Army doesn't believe in dancing. But they have speakers, they have health, they have nutrition talks; they run the whole gamut. They have a regular guideline that you follow for the program.

RN Is that guideline provided by the Salvation Army or the City?

MN It was set up by the federal government. But you would have so many -- well you'd have to have fire drills every quarter and you would have to have a service part where you'd have to have a safety project and our nutrition speaker....

RN Who provides the food?

MN The people pay a dollar and a quarter. It started out at fifty cents; way back when it was fifty cents, isn't that something, and now it's a dollar and a quarter.

RN Well now, that fifty cents meant something; was this in

the '60s or the '70s?

MN The '70s when it started. Actually the meal costs about \$4.75 of which the participants donate, make a donation, of a dollar and....

End of Side 1.

Side 2 of Tape 2.

MN That is set up through the county Social Services.

RN The actual cooking of the food. Is that done by the Salvation Army?

MN In our particular site we have a cook, an assistant cook and a dishwasher and then the volunteers do the setting of the tables and so forth. In some areas, Marriott Hotel provides food for some of the centers; they're catered.

RN So you really don't have anything to say about what the food is consisted of, I mean as a nutritionist?

MN Well they have a nutritionist; they have a nutritionist staff at the Social Service Department. Anne Johns happens to be the one that works with us. And they and the cooks help to plan the menus to see that they have a

certain amount of Vitamin C, all the nutrients that a person needs. It's a third of a day's diet in that one meal and it's all planned out on certain menus quarterly. They have three different sets of menus.

RN I see. So that's actually done at the Salvation Army?

MN That's done at the county level.

RN County level, okay.

MN We have input from the people what they like to eat. It has to be a well balanced meal. They each get a little carton of milk each day plus a salad, the main meal and a dessert. Then often they receive donations so those are handed out to the people. Bread, we've been getting bread from the different bakeries.

RN Can you name the bakeries?

MN I don't know; they come through the....

RN Oh, I see.

MN There was La Boulangerie, breads for one time. They used to bring a lot of it. So that it really has been a

marvelous program for me.

RN What would your typical day be like there?

MN Well, in the morning I would go over and, you know, check in, check the meal and get the -- my assistant organized the books that they register, each person registers every day.

RN Each person registers the day they have their meal?

MN Yes uh huh. For the catered ones they call in a day ahead. But ours, they can just drop in and have a meal. And so we work with the volunteers to help. Somebody comes in and sets the table.

RN What time is the meal served?

MN The first part of the meal is served at 11:30, the main meal at 12:00 and there's a man 90 years old, now 90, that comes in and sets the tables every day and some friends.

RN Wonderful.

MN Yeah, so that we have a lady that's 103 years old and

just recently we lost four or five people that passed away, but they mainly have been up in their eighties and nineties. It's a place for the people to go to each day and I always observed how well groomed and how well dressed they were and they call it home, some people call it home. And we had a van that picks up the handicapped people. And it was a fun job for me because actually after my husband died I didn't have the finances and I have been able to increase my Social Security by working there that length of time. In the meantime, just before I got this job I had a second job. I went to evening at night school that said, "Living alone?" I said, "Well, I'd better go find out how I'm supposed to act living alone." So I went over and I got ahold of these books about widows and I thought, "Boy, if they think I'm gonna act like that, they're crazy." (Laughter) Anyway, pretty soon I got a call from Santa Clara Adult Education and wanted to know if I would be a facilitator in a program for people who'd lost their husbands or wives so I did that for two years.

Loud background noise - truck.

RN Just a moment. Turns off tape recorder. Okay.

MN So I did that work with, they called it "Change in Lifestyles", and I did that for about four sessions until

Proposition 13 sort of knocked out the whole Adult Education program. So the Lord knew that I need some finances so it fitted into my program very well. In the meantime, I had met a gentleman who had just come back from Yucatan, he was down there studying the pyramids, and he came over there to eat and he had long hair and a beard. And I was going with another gentleman who said, "Mildred, I think it's about time you get up and go out." So we used to go for a drive or go out for dinner. So I became interested in this man and he was really a delightful person and he introduced me to the Church of Religious Science and this came right at the opportune time to not only....

RN About what year was this?

MN That was 1975. And this was really a miracle because I had a healing on my back with no more pain. I was healed of cancer, not only once but twice. So I feel, as I look back in my life I feel that I've been a survivor.

RN How do you think the Church of Religious Science helped in that way?

MN Well a whole new way of thinking. I took all the classes; I took Practioning I and II, I took every class

that was available and I studied and I believe in it and I was healed. And I'm sure that this gentleman did a treatment for me for that healing. And it was most interesting....

RN Is it okay to give his name?

MN Peter Walker.

RN Peter Walker.

Long silence on tape.

MN I said, "You know, you're not gonna believe this", and I haven't told anybody but you but something woke me up in the middle of the night and my back rose up, not only once but twice, and a warmth came right through my whole body and the next day I had no pain. A perfect healing.

RN That's really interesting.

MN So she said, "Well, I often see...." Her daughter was very ill and she says, "I often see Jesus right there." You know, I think our whole family, even my son, we live it. And of course I feel that going to this church has been another blessing in my life.

RN Well you give so much to others, Mildred, you know. I'm really very ignorant about how over the years, perhaps you can fill me in, when it comes to charitable work how it -- the only thing I remember is, was it some time in the seventies that Ronald Reagan -- was that, that wasn't Proposition 13? I haven't done my research very well, but Ronald Reagan took the money away from the state and we no longer have an Agnews, the State Hospital, and there was a time when if someone was mentally ill or there was some kind of a problem they would be taken care of out at Agnews, an older person would, and their property would be taken to support them as part of support and that work while the state would support them. And so that's no longer available. Have you seen a change over the years and how this is handled?

MN Well as I understood, when they closed up Agnew State Hospital, the people were put into the college dormitories....

RN The big homes there around.

MN The big homes, the sororities and somebody was supposed to have taken care of those people but I think there was very poor follow-through.

RN Yes indeed.

MN And so they were left to wander. We had many, they call these houses "Halfway Houses", three or four of these homes here were filled with halfway houses until people have bought them up and restored them.

RN And these were the people that had been in Agnew or where?

MN Yes. Yeah, they have now of course restored all the people. Like across the street there's a home for unwed mothers.

RN Oh, is that the Salvation Army sponsored?

MN No no, another organization not a church.

RN That's here on North Third Street?

MN Right across the street from here. That big house over there.

RN With the Queen Anne turret?

MN No, the Queen Anne is my friend Angie's, the one next

door to it.

RN Who is it sponsored by? Do you know?

MN One of the church groups but they have volunteers that come and do the lawns and everything. But you know, a _____ of the organizations get grants. You know there's money available, you have to write for a grant.

RN You write to the federal government?

MN Or whoever presides. I notice that Family Service are always writing for a certain amount of money to fill in where the state doesn't pay for it. Now what's going on now I have no idea except there's hundreds of people coming over here and when you go by you'll see them all sitting out here waiting to go in and have their rent paid for them or part of it. Of course the PG&E has given them money to help pay for their PG&E bills.

RN Now when you say there are hundreds of people over here, I'm not sure what you mean.

MN Well, it generally looks like there's a hundred there but....

RN Well no, as I drove south on Fourth to turn around and come up on Third, there were just many people that looked like they were homeless in that area.

MN Yeah, well those are the people that come either to get....

RN Where do they come to?

MN They come to the Family Service Department.

RN Oh and that's right out here?

MN That's the Family Service Department and if they're in the 9112(?) Zip Zone number they come here.

RN I see.

MN They come to get partial payment, they come to get food, they come to get their PG&E; some of them run up two or three hundred dollars PG&E. They don't pay the whole thing. They have to be almost turned out, turned off, before they can get some help. I think that's one of the worthwhile departments that the Salvation Army has.

RN Oh, then the Salvation Army is the agency for that, oh.

MN Yeah, through the Family Service. Like the Red Cross does, the Salvation Army does this. And then they have the Home League which is the ladies' group.

RN The Home League?

MN Home League, it's a worldwide, the largest woman's organization in the world, and it's connected with the Salvation Army.

RN Well the Home League is something like the Girl Scouts, isn't it?

MN No, the Home League is like your circle, your church circle. Yeah.

RN And they do charitable work?

MN Yeah.

RN That's like knitting the thousand socks you're talking about?

MN No, they have....

RN If you want to get something, I'll just turn this off for

a minute.

You were talking about the Home League.

MN Home League is like the ladies' organization in any church and this one happens to be the second largest woman's organization in the world and its membership is open to all women 16 years or over. You do not have to be a Salvationist. Their program under education is to improve skill and developmental culture, fellowship to share in fun and fellowship, worship to learn more of God and service to learn the joy of giving to others and serving their needs. So its a very worthwhile, very active group.

RN Now again, your involvement with the Salvation Army....

MN I was a member of their staff.

RN And then you did belong to all these, like the Home League, too.

MN Yes, I did belong to the Home League.

RN And the Visitation Group?

MN Well no, I didn't do the visitation. I am not a member

of their church but I attend many of their activities, their dinners and their special services and their memorials. I was interested in it but I'm not interested totally in their philosophy.

RN Now I think this is very interesting because I would think it would be very difficult, from my experience, to be so involved, and you do wonderful good works with the Salvation Army, yet you know how some religious groups are; they keep trying to convert you and keep trying to....

MN No no.

RN And they have not done that? Isn't that interesting.

MN No, they had a very nice program that once a week they would have like a spiritual service, which I enjoyed, where they would sing and people would give up and they give testimonies or something like that. No, they never have asked me to accept Christ in my life. He already was there and I feel no need to go through that procedure.

RN Well you know, sometimes it's...

MN Yes, they keep prodding....Ends in mid-sentence. Pause.

RN This is the Side 2 or Side B of No. 3 Tape concerning the interview with Mildred S. Noble.

MN The Salvation Army right now is in a transition state. They have just recently purchased a church over on Homestead.

RN On Homestead, Santa Clara.

MN Santa Clara. They bought a lovely church grounds there and they're gonna put a new chapel in there.

RN I think that's almost across the street from the Santa Clara main library.

MN Yeah, the church here on North Fourth Street is being used by the Hispanics; they have started a Hispanic group. But the Salvation Army are still maintaining their business offices on North Fourth Street. They're also thinking of moving out from this area. The neighbors have been quite dissatisfied with the transients that seem to come and they seem to blame the Salvation Army for bringing them here. However, those transients used to follow the railroad many years ago.

It was not the Salvation Army that brought them here. The railroad brings many of them here. So they're thinking of selling this property and moving into another area. They're building another citadel. You see, the piece of property that they had here is not in the Hensley Historical Area; it's privately owned by the Salvation Army and I think, and my neighbors think, that with the Salvation Army coming into this neighborhood they improved the appearance because all it was was just a big old warehouse with a train track running through it. And if you were here many years ago, the train went right down through there over to San Jose State College.

RN Yes, I remember it when it was on Fourth Street.

MN Uh huh, it went right by there. So that I think there's been a great improvement. I have the greatest admiration for the people who do work for the Salvation Army and you'll notice that it seems to be a family oriented organization. They go back as far as grandpa and great grandpa or were Salvationists and 'course they try to recruit other people but mainly they recruit some of their own families and many fine young-looking young women and young men are going into the Salvation Army more. And it is a self-protective organization because they look after you.

RN The community of Salvationists.

MN Of Salvationists. They look after you, they don't forget you. You know, when you leave they don't just forget like in other organizations.

RN Yes, other churches.

MN Other churches, they don't follow through. But they follow through on all their people. And they're hard workers; they can put out more work in one hour. But you see, they've been trained how to do things in a big way; nothing is too big.

RN Like the Red Cross, I guess.

MN Yeah, nothing is too big for the Salvation Army. Well I personally think that they do as good a job as the -- of course the Red Cross is good on some of the other ones but I don't think they're as widespread, they're not a church.

RN Well, most of the servicemen you talk to will always praise the Salvation Army.

MN Oh yeah, they know (laughter). They're very generous;

'course everybody gives an awful lot to the Salvation Army. Perhaps the other benefit that the community has is the Salvation Army's thrift stores of which many people can find things that they want. As you read, many many people are going to many of the thrift stores because prices have become so high in the regular stores.

RN Well I know some people of means that it's like it's the thing to do, you know, to go to -- the Salvation Army even has a special boutique, I notice.

MN Yes and they have an antique section. You can pick up some lovely lovely things at -- we used to do fashion shows from the Salvation Army. I'd take the ladies over, they'd pick out the garments that they were going to wear and we'd put on a fashion show and tell how much they cost and most all of them were sold right then and there. (Laughter) So that was kind of a fun thing to do.

RN Oh indeed.

MN Really, I think it's a very fine organization.

RN It's been very convenient for you living so near.

MN Oh yes. If it were some place else I probably would

never have gotten into it. But you see, my needs were met without even asking.

RN That's wonderful.

MN Yeah, and I got a little pension too from them which makes it nice.

RN Oh my yes, I should say. Well, if you think of anything more that you know, we can....

MN For the Salvation Army? I can't think of anything else. All I know is that I think they do excellent work. Nationally they spend less on overhead than any other organization, any other charitable organization.

RN And within the San Jose community, or your awareness of the Salvation Army you mentioned on San Fernando, that was the first time that you....

MN No, I don't think too many people know about the Salvation Army.

RN Well, I must tell you that I was born and raised in this valley and the first time I really went East was in 1946 and the Salvation Army was so evident; this was in the

wintertime, you know, on the corner playing their little band groups and so forth. And I didn't think we had any here, but we did, I just....

MN Well we did. The band played right down here on the corner. I have always told the Salvation Army, "You tell the story so well to your own people but you're not telling it to the community." Now a lot of people know about the Salvation Army but they didn't know about the Nutrition program. But to live in a community and not know about the Salvation Army is really something so they need to work on their public relations. Of course I think now that they've had several big disasters people know a little bit more about them. My daughter was over in England and she said the Salvation Army is right up there with the Church of England; they're so well thought of.

RN Well I was just, you know, shocked when I went back East and found out also that the Salvation Army was a religion. I didn't think it was a religion.

MN You see, a lot of people didn't know, yeah. Well, they used to play down here at the corner at one time when they first came here. They do go out and play but not as much as they used to.

RN Well, their concerts, they have band concerts.

MN They have wonderful bands, oh I tell you! I tell them that everybody in the Salvation Army was born with a musical instrument (laughter). I said, "I don't play anything." They said, "Well you can beat the drums." (Laughter) _____ organization.

RN If you think of anything else, you know, that....

MN Let's stop, disconnect.

RN We have some tape left here and I was getting ready to leave and Mildred started telling me some more that I think is of interest to me. If it's of interest to me, I'm sure it's of interest to others regarding your family.

MN Yes, I was really interested in the information that my cousins had sent to me that our family was one of the last witches that was hung in Salem. And so I....

RN Now, what family name was that?

MN That was from the Thorne family.

RN Your maternal.

MN Huh?

RN Your mother's family?

MN Uh huh. I don't have those papers right with me so I can't give you the names but I could list them for you. And it seems that these two women, very well educated, had come over from England and they had acquired quite a bit of money and great property and so forth and they seem to think that it was jealousy on the part of the church people that got people to start to hang people for witches. And now I think they feel that the children had eaten something that was hallucinating. So looking up the history of our family, I found that the last lady was a relative of ours but there was another lady that was not harmed but she was put into a chicken coop and had to live in that chicken coop all through those cold winters. So they excommunicated them from the churches and so when she got out she went to the courts and told them that she wanted to be brought back into the church and so they were all freed of that excommunication. And there's a road in Framingham, Massachusetts called "Land's End" where she lived and that's the end of that. But it's real interesting because I saw a little article in the

paper about this man who was a member of this society and I called him on the telephone and then he wrote and gave me some information about witchcraft and all of that. So I sort of followed through on this witch thing.

RN And some of your descendants, I understand -- I know that the Daniels came over on the Assurance, I believe that was called.

MN Yes.

RN The second ship after the Mayflower. Well because there were so few people there that you have members of your ancestors married into families that were famous.

MN Right, that's right. Now one of the people that were famous was the first Daniels that came over, the son of the first Daniels, married the Fairbanks family -- into the Fairbanks. It was the first wedding in that community and so they are indirectly related to Douglas Fairbanks. The Fairbanks Scales were named for that family. Fairbanks, Alaska was named for that family and I have a teddy bear that says "Douglas Bearbanks."

RN (Laughter) Bearbanks, how cute (laughter).

MN Yeah, Bearbanks. And so there were many famous people that I didn't realize....

RN Well, you mentioned the Adams's.

MN Well the Adams's and the Emersons. We used to go visit the Emersons all the time. Never realized that we were related to the famous writer.

RN Oh my. Was that Ralph Waldo?

MN Yeah, Ralph Waldo Emerson, uh huh. I know it was said that nobody talked about anybody else in the community 'cause you were related to them. (Laughter) It's been a very interesting history and I keep repeating it to the children all the time hoping they'll take it in, but they say, "Well, why don't you write it down."

RN Oh, that's too bad. Well, I think I'd like to mention the fact that you have a collection of teddy bears that some people would die for (laughter). And many many different teddy bears that you started collecting long before it became popular to collect.

MN Oh, I'll have to tell you how I happened to start collecting teddy bears. Both my sister and I had teddy

bears. We didn't get many toys but we had our teddy bears; she had a boy one and I had a girl one.

RN About what year was this?

MN Oh, I was about four years old, about 1913.

RN Well we have -- I think her title is Director of Education, I'm not sure -- but Virginia Beck is one of the ladies that's in charge of the docents, the guides at the Museum, and she collects teddy bears. And I'm sure you have a collection here she'd die for (laughter).

MN My teddy bear went to camp every year, went to college, arrived to San Jose and I let the children play with it and one day I decided well I just didn't want it anymore. So I kept one ear off of the bear and my sister said, "Well, why did you keep the ear?" and I said, "Well, I wanted something." Well, about 1970 I had a lonely feeling for a teddy bear so I wrote to my sister and I said, "You have your teddy bear in your trunk, can I have it? And I'll give it back to you when I finish with it." Well then people began to see that I was interested in bears and that was back in 1977. So she came out when I had broken my leg and she said, "Well, I didn't want to bring the bear because I thought you might think you

weren't going to live." (Laughter) So I got started on the collection of bears and my son picked up a lot at the Salvation Army. I bought them wherever I went and just actually fell in love with the teddy bears. I think I have plenty right now.

RN Oh indeed you have.

MN My friend where I go at Christmas time, she collects bears and she gave me The Three Bears which goes along with my doll bed that I have that was given to me when I was about two years old. It was in a fire, it was one thing that was saved from this barn fire, and I have my last doll as Goldilocks. So the little children that come over here play with them, and there was a little girl here the other day and she just loved all those bears. Well, I have a Canadian bear, I have -- oh the one that wears the rubber boots, what's his name? -- Paddington. I got him in Boston and I've attended the bear shows here. You know, I went down to the last one and there wasn't a bear there under a hundred dollars.

RN Oh yes. Well I was amazed at the bears that you have that seem to be -- the many bears you have that seem to be the original....

MN Some of them, yes.

RN Teddy bear. They look like the original teddy bear that
was named after Teddy Roosevelt.

MN Yeah, I have one that's a copy from England. I don't
think we got the one that was the Teddy Roosevelt one but
we had one pretty much....

RN Well, the ones that are downstairs in the parlor.

MN Oh, those are great big fat plumpy ones that....

RN They all look alike and they look like the original type.

MN No, they're all the big plump ones that dresses fitted.

RN Oh I see, I see.

MN Yeah, yeah. I have my sister's, it's pretty bedraggled.

RN (Chuckle) Let me turn this off here. Mildred just
brought out this teddy bear that she had and she and her
sister when they were just three years old and it is so
patched and (laughter) I wish that....

MN My grandmother used to sew the soles on their feet
 (laughter) and their paws.

RN Oh yes. Look at that face. You must tell me it's been
 loved and it's been banged around. It's been hated did
 you say?

MN Well, Etta used to just bang the devil out of it.
 (Laughter) She said, "I used to just slap that thing
 around." He really needs to be rejuvenated.

RN Well the material is so different; it's almost like a
 Morris Chair.

MN Yeah, it's mohair.

RN Is that what it is?

MN Yeah, see this is mohair.

RN And it's practically worn (laughter) worn out, look at
 that.

MN My great grandmother did that.

RN Oh, and your great grandmother....

MN And I have a mohair one over here. I think I paid \$90.00 for it; that was the highest price I ever paid for a bear was 90 and now they run \$200.00.

RN Oh yes. Well that one, your great grandmother put the leather paws and....

MN Oh yes, see it all worn here (laughter).

RN Oh yes, and one-eyed (laughter).

MN Well, Et said he had two, button.

RN And that looks like a garment that must be at least a hundred....

MN It's one of my baby dresses.

RN One of your baby dresses. Isn't that something.

MN Uh huh, I brought those all out here.

RN With a plaid bow around his neck (laughter), red and green for Christmas. Well, I think I'm going to allow you to have a cup of tea, Mildred (laughter).

Mildred is just showing me some of these bears and their clothes are precious. This one bear has a dress on that was -- what is it?

MN Worn by Arthur Richardson.

RN Worn by Arthur Richardson. He was born what? In 1846?

MN Yes.

RN And these are his socks attached to the dress. I think these are just precious.

MN Just think of how well that material has....

RN Oh, that material! Look at it.

MN And this is one of my bonnets (chuckle).

RN (Laughter) Well the material's the same on the inside as the outside. This material, it must be a cotton or linen.

MN Oh I think it's cotton.

RN Well, I've never seen a cotton quite so heavy. It's

beautiful.

MN Well, in those days they wove their own, I guess.

RN You think this was woven? Hand woven? Oh that couldn't be.

MN This was the hat I wore, fitted on an orange.

RN (Laughter) Mildred is showing me the cap, the baby cap, that really would fit on an orange. Isn't that beautifully made. My goodness, just can't even imagine.

RN This wraps up a taping session with Mildred Noble at 424 North Third Street, San Jose, California on January 9, 1992. It was a cool morning; we started this session about 9:30 in the morning. It's now afternoon and I think it's a little warmer out-of-doors than it is indoors; it isn't easy to heat these 12- and 14-foot-high rooms. It's clear and sunny out and it's been my pleasure to tape this interview. Perhaps there'll be more of the same in the future with Mildred, but for this day this is Ruth Noseworthy signing off. This is the end of Tape No. 3, Side 2. We're not finishing this tape as of this time, so this is Tape No. 3, Side 2.

End of Tape 2, Side 2.